THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

September 2007
Issue 91 £3.99
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PlayStation 3 | PlayStation 2

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PSM3 Start

"*Killzone 2* is the future of PS3 visuals..."

You've probably seen the trailer – if not, head to www.psm3mag.com now – or read several billion words of internet speculation, but its only on page 20 that you'll see stunning new screens and art from PS3's best looking game. Being cynical, it might be *just* another shooter – albeit the most exciting, frenzied and intense in history – but it's the clearest indication yet that PS3 is as powerful, if not more so, than we dared believe. How will games look two years on? The mind boggles. The issue's stuffed with live E3 reports and hands-on verdicts, so don't delay here – and don't forget to check out our new, 100% free, PSM3 podcasts via the iTunes store, or on our website. The future's dazzling. Now, all we need is a proper price drop...

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
20 dirty US beefburgers consumed
50+ games played
One attempt to hug Hideo Kojima

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"It looks just as good as E3 2005's 'target footage'"

Killzone 2 looks set to make the critics eat their words – page 20

"Koj wants every *MGS* character back"

Metal Gear 4 keeps us guessing – page 34

"There's nothing else like it. One of PS3's most exciting titles"

Why **Prototype**'s shapeshifting makes for a killer game – page 56

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The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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"Sever someone's spine with a toothpick"

Just one reason why the BBFC banned **Manhunt 2**. Read our review on page 76

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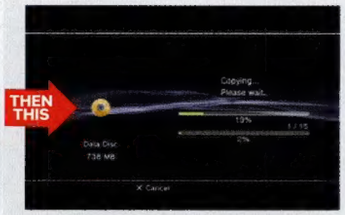
HANDS-ON FOOTAGE
WARHAWK
Watch as we put PS3's killer online title through its paces
FEATURING Splinter Cell Conviction | Kane & Lynch | FIFA 08 | Chronicles Of Riddick | The Agency Stranglehold | Soul Calibur 4 | Assassin's Creed | Skate | Metal Gear Solid 4 | Army Of Two | More

SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3

Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar.



Step two
Select the disc and press △. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

Step three
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails – click ⊗ to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE There's a stack of top treats wedged on the DVD this month. Check out *Splinter Cell Conviction, FIFA 08, Warhawk, Soul Calibur IV, Metal Gear Solid 4* and a tankerful of other games too.

Assassin's Creed
More gorgeous footage of the time-travelling murderer-for-hire. Bathe your eyes in its beauty.

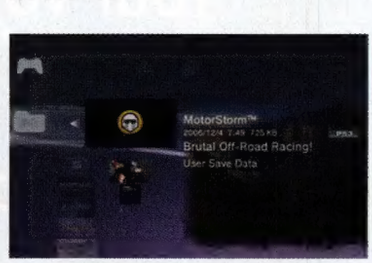
Skate
EA's bash at the skate sim genre may well topple *Tony Hawk*. We'll have the review next month.

+ Kane & Lynch | **Riddick** | Transformers | **EndWar** | Haze | **Blacksite** | More

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – are a must-see. This month, take a look at *GTAIV, Call Of Duty 4, The Agency* and a whole lot more besides.

Grand Theft Auto IV
The brand new trailer from the game everyone's waiting for. Watch out for the helicopter stunt. Can't wait.



PS3 Game Saves
To get 100% complete PS3/PSP game saves (including *MotorStorm*) just slide our disc into your machine.

+ Fallout 3 | **Mercenaries 2** | White Knight Story | **Lair** | The Agency | **More**

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SBK-07

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Frontline

Hard news, all Play

Hideo Kojima at the Sony press event

A Helghast model at the Sushi Roku Killzone 2 event

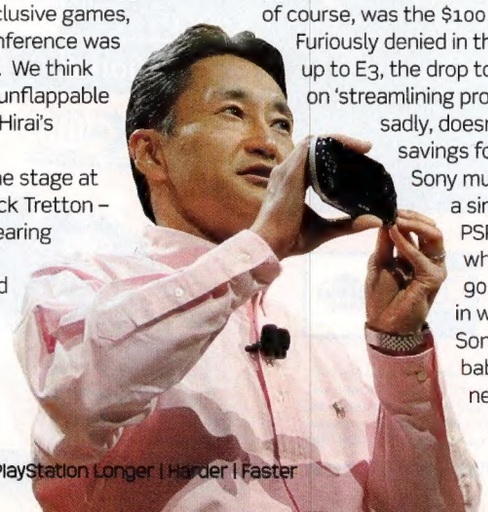
PS3 VERDICT

Sony eclipse rivals at E3, but no UK price drop yet

Killzone 2 wows, but redesigned PSP and UK 'value' pack confuse...

E3 might have gone slimline this time around, but there was nothing low-fat about Sony's presence at what is still the most important game show of the year. With the big three scrabbling for dominance, coupled to PS3's sluggish sales and lack of killer exclusive games, Sony's pre-show conference was make or break stuff. We think we saw the usually unflappable Sony President Kaz Hirai's hands *shaking*.

First man to hit the stage at Sony's show was Jack Tretton – or rather, a chino-wearing avatar of the SCEA president introduced to show off *Home*. Tretton looked slightly more comfortable strolling around virtual town and chatting to faux-ladies than he did when he finally hit the stage – still dressed defiantly smart-casual – to big up Sony's recent achievements and talk upcoming projects. Biggest news for our across-the-pond pals, of course, was the $100 price cut.



Furiously denied in the weeks leading up to E3, the drop to $499's based on 'streamlining production' which, sadly, doesn't translate to savings for Europeans. Sony must be hoping for a similar effect to the PSP price cuts, which has seen a 90 percent increase in weekly sales for Sony's handheld baby. Thankfully never making good on a threat to moonwalk across the stage, Tretton quickly moved onto "Games, games and more games" – the real focus of PS3.

Why E3 changed...

The world's biggest games show used to be held at the massive LA convention centre in downtown, but spiralling costs sparked a down-scaled event shared between multiple hotels in beachside Santa Monica this year. Successful? Jury's out. It was less exciting, with less big announcements – but also less mental, with more time to quiz developers and play key games. We prefer it.

Epic proportions

Potentially the best news for developers is Sony's deal with Epic to optimise the *Unreal 3* Engine for PS3. As well as helping out studios already using it – *Frontlines*, *Stranglehold* and *Fatal Intertia* are just a few of the games based on *U3* – the move should help other developers create power-packed games without starting completely from scratch. Think of it as this generation's Renderware – the Criterion-made engine that made games like *GTA3* and *PES* possible. It's part of a deal that will see *Unreal 3* appearing only on PS3... at least for a while. Also hopping on the exclusivity bandwagon are NCSoft – best known for making PC MMORPG smash *City*

ON THE DISC
See the latest PS3 movies on the disc now

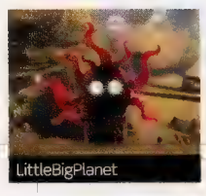
Wookie here [illegible] Jack Tretton, kitted out the new Star Wars-themed PSP – with help from a friend, and indeed...

Of Heroes – who have signed on to develop exclusive games for the Playstation Network. With Sony's first-party spy shooter The Agency being one of the only massively multiplayer games announced so far, it's a smart move.

Meanwhile, Kaz Hirai's first E3 job as president of SCE was to convince everyone that the redesigned PSP is, in fact, loads smaller than the original. "It's difficult to see," he admitted after a chat with Virtual Tretton in *Home*, before going on to point out that PSP2's 19% thinner and 33% lighter than its chunky older brother. Perhaps more importantly, the loading times have been reduced and the battery life improved, which might reduce grumbles and stress on trains. It'll also, crucially, allow you to output high quality video to your TV, letting you play *LocoRoco* or watch UMDs on that Bravia that's taking pride of

Top games The best five games of E3

In order, the top five PS3 games of E3, plus fresh gameplay details and insights...



LittleBigPlanet

A game so wildly creative, joyous and absurd, it denies neat categorisation – but it's obscenly easy to play, with incredibly intuitive, flexible DIY level building. At one point during our three-player hands-on, we high-fived and "Yeaahed!" a colleague – a fullly grown man – in sheer glee, completely unprompted.

Fallout 3

Think *Oblivion*, but set in a dystopian 50s alternate future, with elements of *Gears Of War*, *Resistance*, *FFXII* and, well, almost every good game ever. Technically superb, with incredible destruction, scenery, freedom and genuine moral choices, this could be the best game of 2008. If not, well, ever.

Killzone 2

The game that's single-handedly responsible for changing the perception of PS3 – it's impressive enough, but imagine that quality of visuals applied to, say, *God Of War 3*. The mind boggles. After all the negativity and blunder, Sony delivered potentially the most thrilling, chaotic FPS in history.

Metal Gear Solid 4

Curiously, we still barely know how it plays – despite stop press details on page 36 – but the sight of Raiden twirling around Vamp honestly almost moved us to tears. Yes, we're giant Kojima babies, but he's the industry's only true auteur – say what you will, but at least his games say something – and look aces.

Call of Duty 4

A massive toss-up between this and *Ratchet And Clank* – or maybe *Haze* (there are a lot of FPS's on PS3...) – but Activision's game stirred us with a devilishly edited showreel of in-game set-pieces, perfectly capturing the tech-noir feel – and brutality – of day-after-tomorrow warfare. We hope the play's equally vivid.

Quotes E3 speaks

The standout quotes from the world's biggest games show

"Real-time? You saw him playing it. I wouldn't stake my reputation on it otherwise"

Phil Harrison reacts incredulously when we asked if the *Killzone 2* trailer was real, after being wowed into disbelief at its worldwide premiere.

"It's like, I'm fucking Professor X, and he's Magneto."

***Gears Of War* developer Cliffy B** describes his relationship with *Killzone 2* programmer Arjan Brussee, from Guerilla Games.

"I think people will say to us, 'This is really good for the summer, what are you going to do in October?'."

Sony Europe boss David Reeves hints at an autumn PS3 price drop?

"You can't believe it's happening. Half the people on our team got into games because of *Metal Gear*... we've recorded everything he said and will play it back. It's like 'Ohmigod!'"

***Assassin's Creed* Producer Jade Raymond** explains her reaction after being praised by Hideo Kojima.

"I think the PS3 is the Surf 'n Turf, the PS2 is your favourite burger restaurant... Wii is a lollipop, and I'm too old for lollipops. And the Xbox 360 I get sick from once in a while because the cook isn't always reliable."

SCEA's CEO Jack Tretton compares the console war to restaurants.

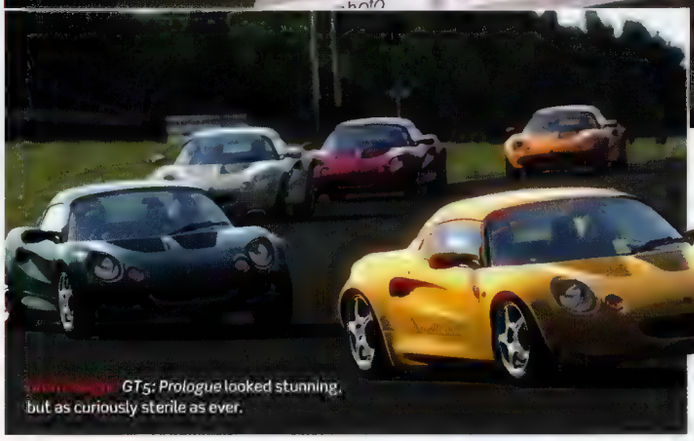
"I love E3. I want my E3 back, hopefully next year will be different."

Hideo Kojima makes an impassioned defence of E3's old format

"I think they have. Not deliberately, but at E3 last year and maybe the year before, the presentations they did to a European and a Japanese perspective – yes. To an American perspective – no, because the difference in cultures is you have to go, 'Ra-ra, I'm the best.'"

David Reeves after being asked if Sony had been arrogant in the past.

Phil Harrison took a pic of the crowd on his mobile and uploaded it instantly into *Home*.



GT5: Prologue looked stunning, but as curiously sterile as ever.

place in the living room. There's also a rumour that the Japanese version of the PSP will soon come with a digital tuner that'll let owners watch freeview TV gratis, though whether Sony have plans to do the same in the UK is up in the air. Sadly, Kaz left the stage without doing his trademark "Riiiiidge Racer!" yell, despite prompting from Jack. Well, he *is* the president now. Tretton was left to introduce PSP's new colours – Piano Black and Ice Silver – along with a special limited-edition Darth Vader model. Obviously, his co-presenter for the latter was a man dressed up as Chewbacca. *Obviously*.

Small time

Elsewhere, the restructuring of E3 made things easier, but deflated the mood. The super-sized LA Convention Centre is no more – with the action shifted to Santa Monica, the only place for publishers to go shoulder-to-shoulder was the more modest Barker Hanger, where regulations mean every publisher (from EA to D3P) gets a moderately-sized table with a few TVs attached. With uncomfy-looking booth babes a fond memory, our sister site gamesradar.com was reduced to snapping comfortably-attired Americans for chuckles, and with giant screens a thing of the past, big games scrabbled to impress. Rather than compete, larger publishers held their own events in hotels scattered around LA, though quality varied widely. Aside from Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson owning the THQ press conference and Jamie 'Scream' Kennedy practically having a breakdown on stage, the biggest celeb around was G4's Olivia Munn. Contrast that with Mr T and Gary Coleman appearances in previous years. Not the same, is it?

What's the future for E3? Well, with publishers unwilling to ditch their chance to go head to head in promotion of their games, it looks like it'll be around for a few years yet. Note to Jack Tretton, though: ditch the chinos next time.

UK PS3 price drop?

In a word, no – not yet (but rumours persist of an Autumn price cut). We are getting a 'value' pack, mind. It's still £425, but you get get two Sixaxis pads, *Motorstorm* and *Resistance*. It's better, but slashing PS3 to £299 on the day *PES '08* launches would be *ideal*.

Riff justice *Rock Band* wowed all-comers at the busy EA stand.

"Almost, almost a rival to *Killzone 2*..."
Call Of Duty 4 page 11

PS3 RESULT

The top five mad, bad and glad moments of E3

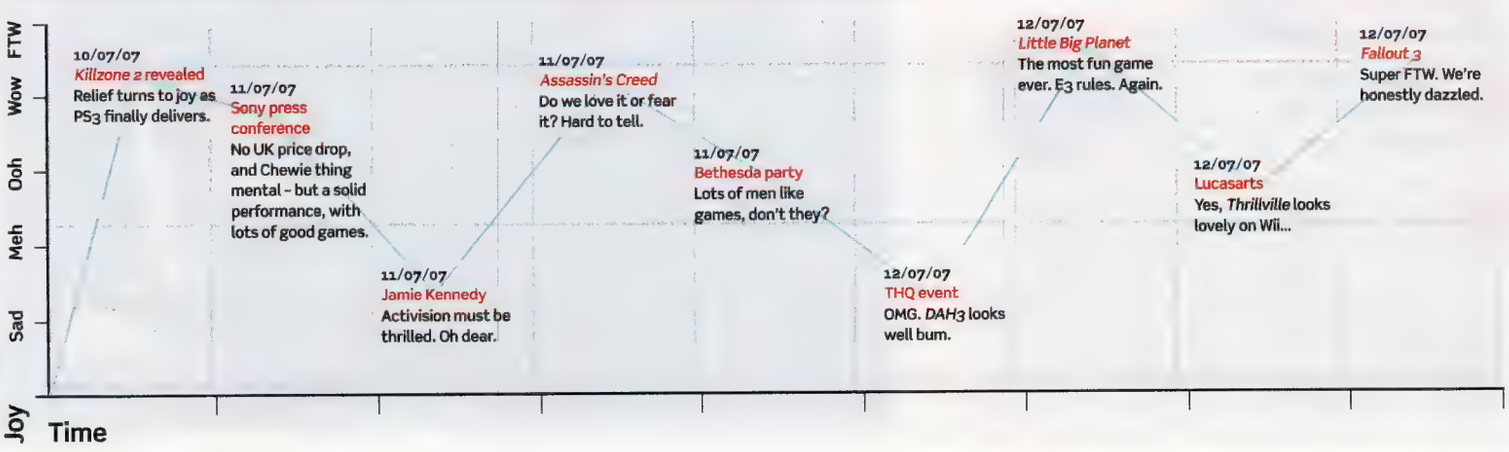
Kojima, Slash and the slowest stage death ever...

While not quite as eventful as previous shows – with past highlights including Mr T's roaring endorsement of *Rocky*, Shinji Mikami's *DMC* finger pistols and Outkast's gig at the Sony party – we were treated to an appearance from **(1) Guns N Roses guitarist Slash** – who plays a boss in Activision's forthcoming *Guitar Hero III*. Oddly, the host implored him to smoke on stage to re-inforce his rock credentials, as a bemused, softly spoken Slash, explained his genuine love of the game. **(2) *Metal Gear* genius Hideo Kojima,** made an impassioned speech in defence of E3, begging for a return to its old extravagant format, "I want my E3 back... I love E3!". **(3) Scream star and C-list 'comic' Jamie Kennedy** hosted the Activision press conference, with a string of lame jokes about games, nerds and virgins. He rallied, but not until the crowd were scoring points off him (try 'Jamie Kennedy + E3' on YouTube). **(4) UFC champ 'Rampage' Jackson** single-handedly saved the dire THQ conference, after a string of derivative demos and dull PR waffle – "I'm lucky to be here, I was out partying until 5am!". **(5) The Barker Hangar shamed us all** – instead of the rammed E3 hall of old, we got this crud aircraft base, with *one* security guard. Bah.

Event E3 | **Attendees** Games Industry | **Wheno** July 07

Diary The E3 mood-o-meter

From *Killzone 2* to THQ's largely duff press conference, here's the emotional highs and lows...



(We've ommitted sharing a return flight with James Nesbitt, oddly)

ON THE DISC
You can see *Call Of Duty 4* in multi-player action

The Opinionator

"Online gaming is a joyless tirade of endless abuse"

Obviously, online gaming is a technical marvel. We've waited years for games machines to become powerful enough to handle the complex coding routines necessary for the transfer of information across an international gaming network. Then we waited a few more years for the speed of our broadband services to catch up, so we could actually connect to the thing. And all this, only to find that playing online is less about games, and more about paying for the privilege of subjecting yourself to the squealed invective of socially inadequate delinquents across the world.

Scumbags and wasters

The fault doesn't lie with Sony or the games publishers – policing the vast servers on which the games run is a nigh-on impossible task. Self-regulation is the key, but the sad fact is that if you let some kids loose in a consequence-free environment, you get a terrifying glimpse into their minds – they're full of deep-rooted insecurities, a basic disregard for other living things and possess a teeming vocabulary of racial slurs.

A friend in need

Luckily, there's an answer, and it's brilliantly simple – don't play with them. Play with your mates instead – real-life ones, preferably, or reliable men and women you pick up along the online road. Arrange game times in advance and fill as many slots as possible with people whose company you enjoy. Eject any outsiders that find themselves incapable of conducting themselves politely. Revel in the glorious silence of the raging adolescent horde not shouting in your ear. There is hope – just remember to stick together in packs, and don't stray far on your own. Simple, yes? **Nathan Ditum**

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

Upgrading the hard drive on your PS3 is hard

THE TRUTH

For once, the truth is a pleasant surprise. Putting a bigger hard drive into your PS3 is a piece of cake, requiring just a little gentle handling and very low level of expertise. Buy a replacement drive – making sure you get a 2.5mm SATA notebook to match the existing one in the machine – then pop the plastic cover off the PS3's HDD bay. Unscrew and slide out the drive tray from the PS3 and unscrew and disconnect the old drive. Slip the new one in, put the whole thing back together and you're ready to reboot and reformat. The best thing is, although you'll lose your saved games, the console settings, network ID and software upgrades are all unaffected. In-depth step-by-step guides are available all over the net if you need more info.

1 Unreal Tournament 3
Mad new weapon revealed

Now PS3 exclusive, and a blisteringly fast visual doppleganger of the normally-superior PC version, with support for custom mods and the ability to play online with PC users. But forget that, because in our E3 demo we were witness to the best weapon in FPS history – the gelatinous cube gun (not its real name). With it you can create a wobbling block of jelly that absorbs missiles and gunfire. You can even sit inside it and use it as a shield. *Genius*. You can also zoom around on a hoverboard using the Sixaxis and perform *SSX*-style tricks. *Unreal Tournament* FTW.

Pub Midway | **Dev** Epic | **ETA** November

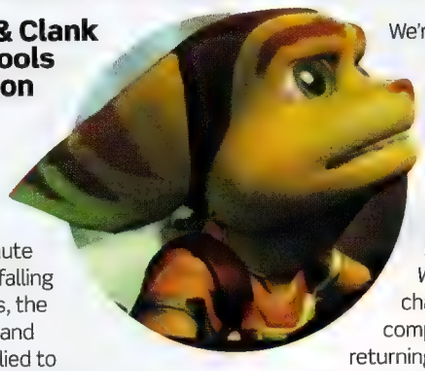
Walk the line In *Unreal*, players can pilot these deadly walking spider mechs.

Unreal/Unreal *Unreal 3* is now a PS3 exclusive. Reason for celebration, no doubt.

"Sit inside a jelly cube to protect yourself from enemy gunfire"

2 Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools Of Destruction

Another PS3 must-have



We couldn't put the pad down – the pacing is ferocious. One minute you're Sixaxis freefalling through flying cars, the next grinding rails and leaping rockets, allied to impeccably executed platforming and shooting bits. Initially, it's a technically accomplished, gently impressive, technicolour riot of hi-def detail, but zoom-in and you can see the individual hairs on Ratchet's ears. Simply mesmerising.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac | **ETA** November

3 Silent Hill 5

New devs take charge

Alex Shepherd is a soldier returning from an unnamed war to find that his brother and father have mysteriously disappeared. We're guessing foggy old Silent Hill is responsible. Sadly, original developers Team Silent are no longer working on the series. Instead, The Collective – the people behind, erm, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Star Wars Episode III* – are in charge. Mercifully, *SH* composer Akira Yamaoka is returning to do the music. The brief trailer shown at E3, with narration from Shepherd and some spooky flickering images – but no actual footage – was a big disappointment. Still, one to watch.

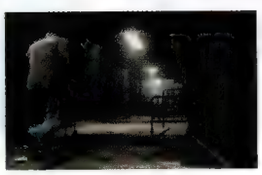
Pub Konmai | **Dev** The Collective | **ETA** 2008

4 Need for Speed ProStreet

NFS gets back in gear

No – don't skip to *Call Of Duty*. EA have woken up the *NFS* series with blistering pace, and new game modes. We played a 'speed race' – look out for Traction, Drag and Drift modes, too – that saw us shooting down a dusty valley (with incredible, agoraphobia-inducing horizons) at 190mph, desperately fighting to dodge the crippling off-road dust. It's almost *too* fast, and feels very twitchy – but realistic, with terrifying sensation of weight. Incredible plumes of volumetric smoke are kicked up as you skid about, making clouds that you can use to confuse opponents.

Pub EA | **Dev** EA | **ETA** November



Silent Hill* and *ProStreet **A man in a filthy corridor and a scary chair. Yep, it's *SH*. *NFS* looks nice too.**

5 Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

Slowing down the pace

Almost, almost, a rival for *Killzone 2*, with incredible ambient detail, and a real squad feel – we loved the tanker heist (shooting enemies in their sleep – ugh) and a desert chopper landing as well. More soon.

Pub Activision | **Dev** Infinity Ward | **ETA** October

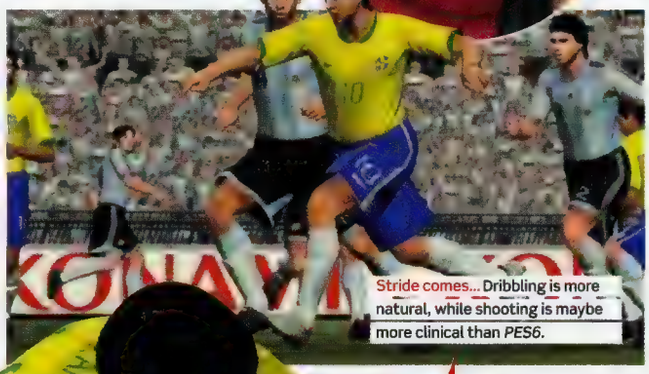
ON THE DISC
See the *Fallout 3* teaser on next month's disc

PS3 REPORT

PES 2008: first hands-on details

Dives, tricks and killer tackles...

Tackling's the big change, with players constantly nibbling at their rival's heels – even when they turn their back. Fluid, realistic, animations dominate – John Terry faces the other way, but pokes out a leg when blocking shots – while wingers raise their heads before crossing. Menus are cleaner, centre backs can be deliberately brought foward at set-pieces and older defenders like Cannavaro are slower than ever, but wilier. Passing is tight, with a more fluid feel than last year's 360 game. More next month.



Stride comes... Dribbling is more natural, while shooting is maybe more clinical than *PES6*.

...before a fall You can dive, but refs aren't easily fooled. Don't worry, it doesn't hamper play.

Stick man challenge

Can you guess what game this is?

Okay, so last month's rendition of a load of stick-villagers with pitchforks and chainsaws was probably a bit easy – it was obviously *Resi 4* – so this time we've toughened things up. Play the game normally, and you might not even see this scene: that's how obscure our brains go when we're rendering tiny stick people. Remember, it's just for fun – unless we've got some tat we don't want in the office when you write in.

PS3 REPORT

Fallout 3 wows E3

It's *Oblivion* in space – and potentially the best game ever

Game of the show? Maybe – but while even *Killzone 2*'s hearty reception at the Sony conference was pre-empted by polite PR claps, after a slick one hour demo of *Fallout 3* a room of weary journos – including PSM3 – burst into unprompted rapturous applause. Why? Sheer respect – with over a year of development left, it already looks like the most exciting, innovative and technically dazzling game of 2008.

Set in an alternate future, where '50s utopia leads to nuclear annihilation, you play a survivor in the mysterious Vault 101 – but are forced to brave the vicious outside world when your father goes inexplicably

"Move the D-pad up or down to smile or frown"
LittleBigPlanet page 18

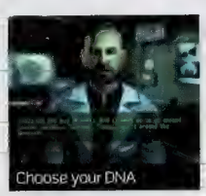
AWOL. It's a bit like *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* – developer Bethesda Softwork's breakthrough PS3 game – but with the raucus combat of *Resistance*, real-time strategy of *FFXII*, stealth of *Splinter Cell* and freedom of *GTAIV*. Like *Oblivion*, you're free to explore, making critical moral choices – in our demo, a key decision led to the nuclear destruction of an *entire* town (which we'd previously explored, and befriended its inhabitants), portrayed in shuddering real-time as chilling winds ripped from the mushroom blast cloud, eventually shaking your distant vantage point. Awesome.

Pub TBA | **Dev** Bethesda | **ETA** Late 2008

Features

Five ways *Fallout 3* innovates

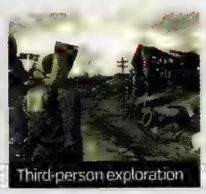
RPG? Pah – it's the game to end all games


Choose your DNA

You begin the game as a baby in Vault 101, setting seven primary attributes that affect the course of your entire life. Choose your appearance and your father (voiced by Liam Neeson) alters his look to accurately reflect them. Incredible.

PIP boy menu system

Your cheerful, '50s kitsch, personal computer stores all your attributes, including strength, intelligence, charisma and luck – all with a significant impact on your playing style. Strong but thick? You can take drugs to make you briefly brainy.


Third-person exploration

It looks like an FPS, but you can flip into stunning third-person at any time – ideal for stealth, or dodging enemy fire. Unlike most open-world games, the world is staggeringly detailed, with fully destructible scenery.

Insane narrative depth

A complex conversation tree affects your status with every character in the game world – allowing not just love/hate relations, but ambiguous shades of grey. Be a hero or villain, or pretend to be either, then shop in your allies for gain.

V.A.T.S. combat

Fight in real-time with a huge variety of weapons, but the action point-fuelled Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System lets you pre-load strings of critical hits – e.g. head shots with 46% likelihood – as foes draw near. Tactically deep.

ON THE DISC
See Soul Calibur IV on this month's disc

Level best It's amazingly easy to create complex architecture with the flexible, intuitive menus.

Bean and gone Drop an object into the world and you can leap onto it or just toss it around.

PS3 REPORT

Little Big Planet charms E3 daft

We've played it – a lot – and here's how it really works

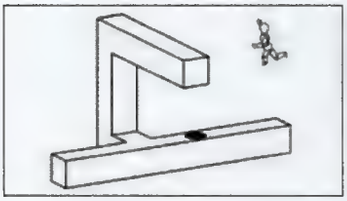
Objectives? Goals? Time limits? Pah – Sony's DIY platformer eschews normal rules, rewarding creativity and impish sabotage. We spent over an hour wibbling about in three-player, as Media Molecule's Alex Evans, used the game's astonishingly simple menus (just tap ○ and scroll through the objects) to create a tank in real-time, using a square block, two circles and a 3D rubber tool. Push it so it rolls, then hold R1 to grip on for dear life – or do the same to your pal and throw him around. Every objects obeys real physics, with heavy items needing multiple folk to shift. Best of all, you can move the D-pad up and down to smile or frown, and hold L2/R2 to move your arms freely with the right analogue sticks and, say, do the Timewarp. Barking, creative madness – much more soon.

Tank you The blue outline shows the incoming shape, or can be used to rub out whole sections.

Bulls eye You can put stickers on anything – we covered our tank in beef 'n' egg decals in our demo.

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

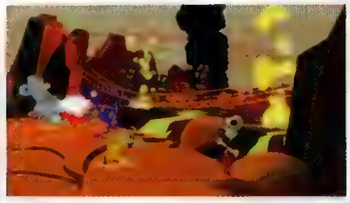


PS3 Echochrome

Details Pub Sony | **Dev** Japan Studios
Genre Puzzle
Lowdown Spin a 3D object around to stop a tiny mannequin from dying: it's Sony Japan doing MC Escher doing *Lemmings*, and it looks furiously addictive. Coming to the store.
ETA TBA

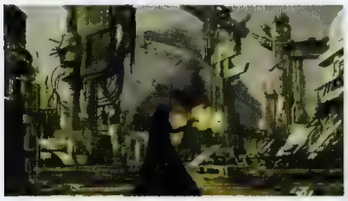
PS3 inFamous

Details Pub Sony | **Dev** Sucker Punch
Genre Third-person shooter
Lowdown Choose your superpowers, then choose if you're a hero or a villain. Done that? Right, now go and fry everyone online with bolts of electricity. Should be great.
ETA Spring



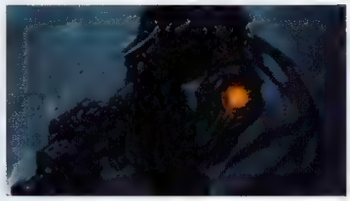
PS3 Hail To The Chimp

Details Pub Gamecock | **Dev** Wideload
Genre Party
Lowdown Gamecock call this a "politically-charged party game" – the characters compete to replace the lion as King Of The Jungle. We call it 'minigames with monkeys.'
ETA Spring



PS3 Star Wars: Force Unleashed

Details Pub Lucasarts | **Dev** Krome
Genre Action
Lowdown Best bit? A Jedi flinging an entire Star Destroyer into the floor using the Digital Molecular Matter system. Brilliant.
ETA October



PS3 Darksiders: Wrath Of War

Details Pub THQ | **Dev** Vigil | **Genre** Action
Lowdown No, you really are War, horseman of the apocalypse. Demons have kidnapped the other three. How do you kidnap *Death*? Anyway, expect *God Of War*-style play.
ETA Mid-2008

PS3 The Simpsons

Details Pub THQ | **Dev** Rainbow | **Genre** Action
Lowdown Tons of hyper-obscure references in this – you fight the dolphins from one of the Hallowe'en episodes, for instance – embiggen a co-op scrapper. Rumour is Simpsons creator Matt Groening is the final boss...
ETA October

PS3 Quake Wars

Details Pub Activision | **Dev** Splash Damage/ iD Software **Genre** FPS
Lowdown It's humans against Stroggs... with vehicles, aircraft and computer-controlled bots to keep things interesting. Looking beautiful, this, but a long way off.
ETA Late 2008

PS3 Guitar Hero III

Details Pub Activision | **Dev** Neversoft
Genre Rhythm Action
Lowdown With part three focusing on string-breaking, lefty-flipping guitar duels, the big E3 reveal was that the final boss will be former Guns 'N' Roses plectrum-beast Slash. Rawk.
ETA November

PS3 Turok

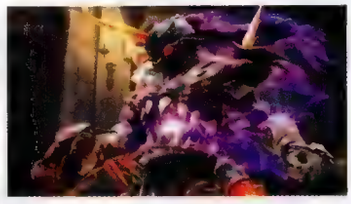
Details Pub Disney| **Dev** Propaganda
Genre First-person shooter
Lowdown Dinos in deathmatches? Nice idea. Capture The Flag games with the flags impregnated with T-rex-attracting chemicals? Brilliant idea. *Please* be good, new *Turok*.
ETA November

PS3 Time Crisis 4

Details Pub THQ | **Dev** Rainbow Studios
Genre Shooter
Lowdown Played it in the arcades? Yeah, but the PS3 version's going to include a special FPS mode to let you take on other players using outside-the-screen gun pointing...
ETA November

PS3 Haze

Details Pub Ubisoft | **Dev**Free Radical Design
Genre FPS
Lowdown The twist? You play most of the game on the Rebel side, after defecting from Mantel. Bonus: you can steal Nectar from fallen foes, and use them in bombs.
ETA November



PS3 Soul Calibur IV

Details Pub Sony | **Dev** Namco
Genre Beat-'em-up
Lowdown The trailer teases a new girl similar to Sophitia, but the big news is that there will be a guest character from a film series "with sabres". We're thinking Depp. Or Knightley...
ETA Spring

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy

No PS3 price cut? Didn't want one...

Decisions are hard. Decisions make my brain hurt. That's why you've got to hand it to Sony: instead of simply knocking, say, 100 quid off the price of a PS3 and letting me spend it on whatever I like, they've decided to leave the price as it is and include some of their own games in the cost instead. Brilliant. After all, if they gave us the choice we might go and buy a copy of *Virtua Fighter 5* instead of *Genji*, and we all know *Genji* is loads better anyway. We might even forget to buy any of their games at all and spend the cash on crisps or shoes instead of that gleaming copy of *F1*. Oh, and they're chucking in a pad, which is good news – after all, they *definitely* won't be bringing out a rumble version that'll make it obsolete any time soon, right? *Right*?

Across the pond

What? They've cut the price in America? Oh, sure, but that's only to convince Americans to buy it, because they're idiots. Anyway, they won't get the most out of their PS3s because they'll be too busy drinking their frappucinos and going to the cinema. Not us in Britain – after dropping over four hundred notes on our new games machine, we won't be able to afford to do anything but stay in, eat Greggs' pasties and play *Ridge Racer 7*. Thanks for making sure we make the right decisions, Sony.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Upset about the lack of a price cut?
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PS3

Pub Sony | **Dev** Guerilla Studios
Players TBC | **Genre** FPS
FYI The game to really show PS3's power

ON THE DISC
See the *Killzone* 2 trailer on next issue's disc

Killzone 2

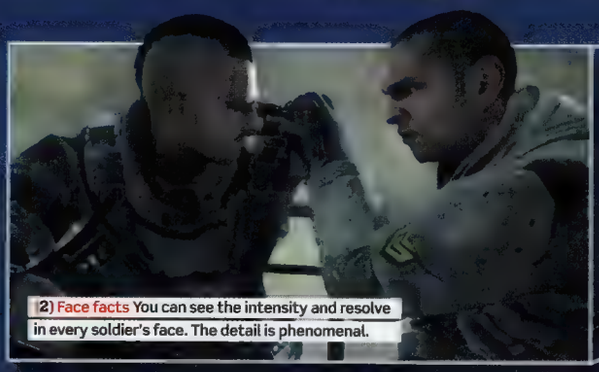
"Looks just as good as the 'target footage' shown at E3 in 2005"

PS3 FIGHTS BACK

How Sony's shooter saved PS3 - and why games will never be the same

One pre-rendered trailer, 135 developers, 40 million dollars, a typhoon of internet abuse later and Guerrilla have finally done it – they've proven to the world that *Killzone* on PlayStation 3 not only exists in playable form, but looks just as good as the 'target footage' shown at E3 2005. At an exclusive unveiling in Los Angeles, we were treated to a live 30-minute demo of the game in action, with director Mathijs De Jonge and producer Steven Ter Heide playing a level in real-time, with a Sixaxis, on PS3.

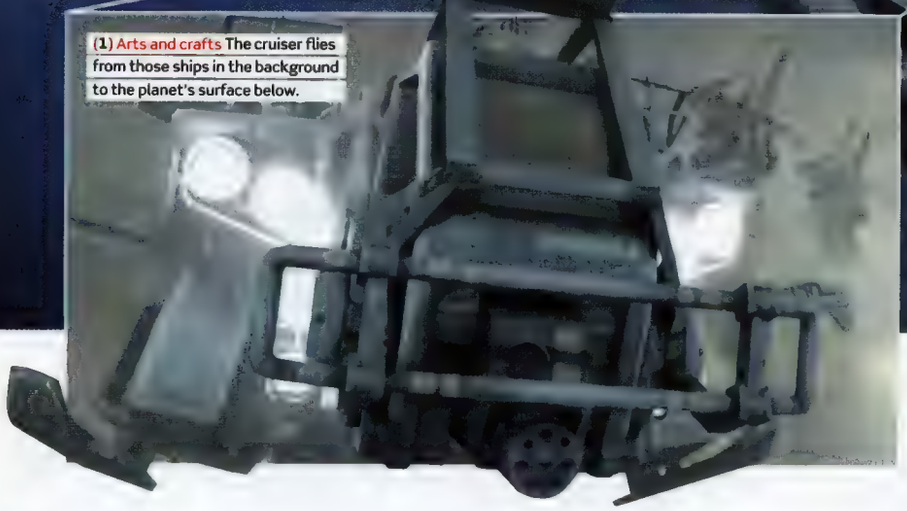
The rest, as they say, is history. From the instantly gripping descent on the Vektan dropship – tinged with the fear that *somehow* this might still be all pre-rendered footage – to the frenzied landing



(2) Face facts You can see the intensity and resolve in every soldier's face. The detail is phenomenal.

Brothers in arms

Not only do The Legion look great, but their voice acting's top notch too. The cruiser's pilot relays convincing military lingo over the radio ("AGA to link-up, 30 seconds. Six clicks to the AO.") and the soldiers chat amongst themselves. ("Hey Gardiner, you look cold." "I am cold! Right now I can't feel my nuts.") It's rare to see in-game characters with such legitimate personalities.



(1) Arts and crafts The cruiser flies from those ships in the background to the planet's surface below.

Vektan cruisers

So-called because they were designed on the ISA planet of Vekta. They're used to ferry troops from bases in the sky to the battlefield below, if they don't get struck by the Helghast's lightning towers first...

and shiver-of-relief comprehension that, no, this is real, as bullets rain in with terrifying intensity; to the rifle's jaw-dropping HDR and zoom effects, to the dazzling rain-lashed rooftop where we're unnaturally thrilled at the sight of windswept wires: we were gripped in our seats, absolutely, honestly, astonished – and, well, more than a bit relieved. The E3 2005 trailer was a lie, but PS3's power, and potential, is faith re-affirmingly real.

As we shuffle out of the theatre, we find ourselves drawn to Sony Worldwide software boss, Phil Harrison, and – despite our default inclination to cynicism and crap British reserve – find ourselves garbling, "That was incredible, seriously," leaving Phil standing there like a proud dad, softly – and, we think earnestly – whispering "Thanks". Outside the demo theatre – think the trailer looks good on a PC monitor? Wait until you see it on a 15-foot projector screen in 7.1 Dolby Surround – we're dismayed to hear one or two journalists muttering indifferently or lamenting the lack of 'set-pieces'. So much so, we start poking one magazine editor in the chest and bark "If you don't like games, stop writing about them," before a colleague tells us to calm down. And we know we've gone a little bit mad. But it doesn't really matter. Because if a game, however briefly, makes you think that the medium – the passion to which you dedicate a large part of your life – is capable of experiences, of new worlds, of visuals you never thought possible, then surely it's worth dropping the cruddy natural cynicism and just revelling in the frontier of possibility. Inner child – give me five.

Highlights? Watch it. In fact, watch *Gundam: Target in Sight* first, then *Killzone 2*. Are they really running on the same machine? The demo begins in the realistic, intricately-rendered clouds high above Helghan, the home planet of the evil Helghast army. **(1) You and your squad, a troop of ISA Special Forces soldiers called The Legion, are flying towards the planet's surface on the back of a Vektan cruiser.** The scene is almost identical to

In the zone

PSM3 Impressions

Dan > Inspiring
I attended the unveiling at Sushi Roku, and left the theatre stunned – as much through relief, since I was cynically fearful beforehand. *Killzone 2* might not redefine FPSs, but the benchmark it sets for PS3's potential is thrilling.

Milf > Amazing
It's incredible to see how close Guerilla have got to the target footage shown two years ago. The level of detail and chaos on display makes me think of a futuristic *Call Of Duty*, which has got my trigger finger twitching. Now Sony, get that demo on the PlayStation Store, STAT.

Killzone 2

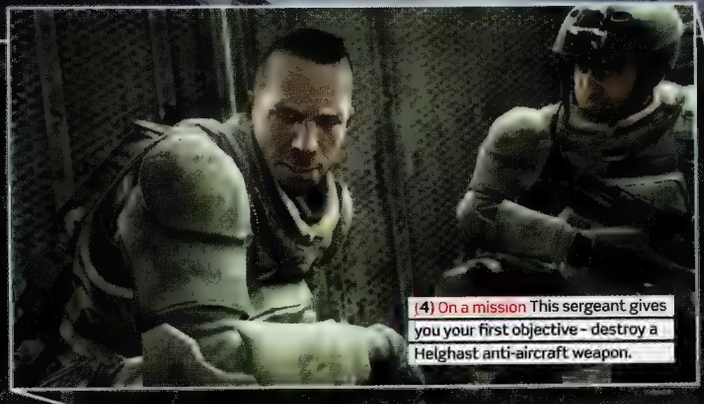
"You can actually see the soldiers psyche themselves up for battle"

the one shown in the 2005 trailer and it looks absolutely incredible. (2) **The soldiers are particularly impressive, with detailed clothing textures and expressive facial animations.** You can actually see them psyche themselves up for the battle ahead and, according to the developers, a single character model has the same amount of polygons as a *level* in the first *Killzone*.

Calm before the storm

But of course, this being a war game, the peace doesn't last. Suddenly one of the cruisers flying alongside you is struck by a lightning bolt and explodes, evaporating the soldiers on board. Your squad springs to life and the clouds below you part to reveal the Helghan capital city of Pyrrhus and its war-torn streets. It's an imposing sprawl of burned-out buildings, storm clouds, explosions and smoke stretching endlessly into the distance. And while all of this is happening, your team prime their weapons and prepare to land. It's like Saving Private Ryan meets Blade Runner.

When your cruiser hits terra firma the level begins proper. (3) **The transition is seamless and the game looks just as**



(4) On a mission This sergeant gives you your first objective – destroy a Helghast anti-aircraft weapon.

Friends in need Other ISA soldiers land and help you push through the Helghast's tough defences.

(3) Action stations The moment you step off the Vektan cruiser you find yourself in the thick of a firefight.

good from a first-person perspective as it does in the intro. The Legion charge into battle, running down a wide road scattered with debris, dodging gunfire from entrenched Helghast troops. A vehicle explodes and its driver spills out engulfed in flames and lightning bolts tear through the sky. It's utterly chaotic, and the game's 7.1 surround sound support makes it overwhelming not only for your eyes, but your ears as well.

Buddy system The AI will work in packs to hunt you down. The Helghast are incredibly well-trained, so stay sharp.

"Overwhelming, not only for your eyes, but your ears"

Less haste, more speed

It's here that we begin to understand how *Killzone 2* works. The player cautiously makes his way up the street, taking cover behind anything, slowly but surely making his way towards a commander up ahead to receive his orders. He safely makes it behind a barricade and 'objective completed' flashes at the top of the screen, confirming that this is in-game, real-time, and with zero lull in intensity when you're being given orders by lavishly animated comrades. (4) **You find the commander crouched over a map.** He orders you to push ahead and take out an anti-aircraft gun called an 'Arc Tower' that's blasting ISA cruisers out of the air before they have a chance to land. It's familiar first-person shooter fare, but the atmosphere and visuals make it a lot more interesting than another gloomy trudge through wartime Normandy.

Cover me

You break your cover and

Blast factor Being an FPS, static gun emplacements feature heavily.

(8) William shatter Some cover is temporary. Eventually this pillar will shatter, exposing the Helghast behind it.

It's instantly clear how different *Killzone 2* is from other first-person shooters

(7) Weak spot To defeat this tough mother you have to shoot his fuel pack. Harder than it sounds...

The cover system

Killzone 2's big innovation explained

Rather than just crouching behind objects, there's an actual cover system in *Killzone 2*. Pressing ⓞ next to an object puts you into cover mode. This lets you use the left stick to pop up, lean left, lean right or take precise, aimed shots. You can even blind-fire by pressing ⓡ3. But if the enemy is above you, they can see over your cover and fire, so you need to make sure your cover is on the same plane as them.

Guard to beat Heavily armoured guys like this serve as mini-bosses to help break up the levels.

continue, only to be immediately confronted by a Helghast hopping over a wall. (5) **The animation is scarily realistic; with motion-captured movements so natural, you almost can't believe he can be shot.** But, as dazzling as it is, you have to ventilate the masked swine with your M-82 assault rifle. Zooming through the rifle's emerald-tinged sights, the depth of field effects are amazing. Everything around the reticule blurs and it mimics the behaviour of the human eyeball remarkably well. (6) **Fire the rifle and the muzzle flash lights up the walls around you, sending the Helghast tumbling backwards in a macabre dance of death, blood exploding from his chest.** It's some of the most vivid and intense FPS action we've ever seen. From what we've seen, (7) **there are dozens of different Helghast types, ranging from the familiar black-helmeted variety to enormous heavy duty chaingun-toting guys whose hefty armour seems impossible to penetrate.**

The next level

It's instantly clear how different *Killzone 2* is from most other first-person shooters. Not in terms of concept or gameplay, but in that it's so robust and dynamic. (8) **Surfaces shatter and crumble when your bullets hit them, characters move realistically through the environment with weighty animations and the levels are densely packed with detail and spot effects like power lines wobbling in the wind.** While a lot of the set-pieces in *Resistance* and *Call Of Duty 3* were amazing, it felt like more like you were a spectator rather than actually taking part. *Killzone 2* changes all of this.

Guerrilla aren't focusing entirely on flashy visuals – they've also released details about *Killzone 2*'s story. Not only will heavy weapons expert Rico Velasquez be returning, but special ops lady Lugar and Evelyn from *Killzone: Liberation* also show their faces. The plot focuses on the

In the zone

PSM3 Impressions

Dave › Electric
I've become jaded with FPS's recently, but the *Killzone 2* trailer soon changed that. If it plays in the same epic, apocalyptic way as it looks, it should have PS3's flying off the shop shelves. Can't wait to actually play it now.

Rich › Reassuring
Killzone 2 (along with a lot of the other games at E3) has really got me excited about PS3 again. Sony have truly upped the ante.

Gunning for glory Fans of the first *Killzone* will recognise the ISA's standard issue M-83 assault rifle.

Blood sport

Killzone 2 embraces the violence

Another thing we noticed about *Killzone 2* was how violent and vivid the Helghast's death animations were, and the amount of blood that went flying about whenever you filled them with lead. And when they die, you don't get the usual lame ragdoll death; they slump heavily to their knees and keel over, rather than flop around wildly. Grenades are fun too. The impact of the blast sends the Helghast tumbling forward. The game's deaths are some of the most realistic we've ever seen, and complement the visuals perfectly.

(6) Lights out The way your gunfire lights up dark rooms like this is really incredible to see in motion.

ISA taking the battle to the Helghast's front door after weakening them in the first game. You could also hear Scolar Visari's rousing speech from the first Killzone's intro movie blaring through speakers on the streets. He's the Helghast's evil dictator and we'd be very surprised if he doesn't return to cause us more bother in *KZ2*.

The beady-eyed Helghast are more inventive than the ISA could've anticipated. Somehow, they've managed to harness Helghan's atmosphere and, amazingly, use it as a weapon against invaders. Those Arc Towers we mentioned earlier play a key role. They use them to, we think, pull storm clouds from the sky, absorb their power and use the collected lightning energy like a laser beam. (9) **At the end of the demo we watched the developers destroy one of the towers.** First, they fought their way through lines of Helghast to reach it, again showcasing the fluid animation and muzzle flash effects. When they reach the Arc Tower they push a button to open hatches on its side. This exposes a glowing red core, which is fired upon resulting in the tower's epic, fiery destruction. And then

Rendered vs in-game

How do the 2005 and 2007 trailers compare?

Scene 01 The clouds and the soldier's head in the pre-rendered trailer are more detailed, but only just. The facial animation's a lot more expressive this time around, but again, there's not really much difference between both.

Scene 02 The animation of the men in the 2005 trailer is more expressive and fluid, as are their facial expressions. The slightly stiffer in-game models have just as much personality, however, and once again the difference is negligible. Amazing.

Scene 03 The pre-rendered flaming man tops the in-game flaming man by a long shot. The fire's incredibly realistic and the animation's much smoother. We're actually a bit let down by the 2007 flaming man. It looks a bit unnatural. Oh well.

In the zone

PSM3 Impressions

Nathan > Inspiring
Though I'm still looking forward to *Haze* that tiny bit more, *Killzone 2* still looks incredibly exciting and will hopefully get developers to put a bit more effort into getting the most out of PS3. Let's wait and see.

Andy > Intense
If the action is this chaotic throughout the entire game then it'll be one of the best on PS3. Will all the levels be this mental?

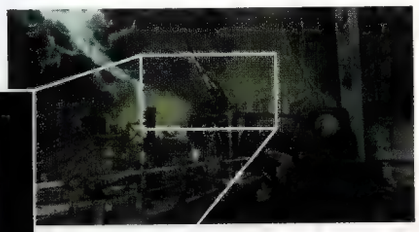
nothing. The demo... ends.

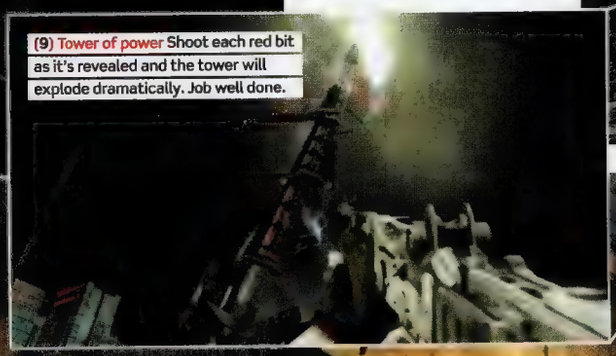
Setting the standard

Killzone 2 was almost everything we'd hoped for, and miles ahead of what we secretly feared – not bad, for a relatively tame third level. The primary emotion, relief, was soon replaced with a tingling delight that Sony had lived up to the standards of that E3 2005 trailer. In 30 minutes, Sony transformed the perception of PS3 from an overpriced extravagance populated by me-too Xbox 360 ports, to the most exciting, important console in the world. It doesn't have any gimmicks - time travel, performance-ehancing drugs, or gravity guns. Its 'novelty' is good looks, intensity, and how it single-handedly shames absolutely almost everything rival consoles had to offer. That said, it's the second time a *Killzone 2* trailer has ruined E3 – this time for making almost every other game look so terrifyingly ordinary.

PSM3 Reckons

Save the innovative cover mechanic, it's largely regulation FPS fare and – being professionally cynical, on the basis of one level – with a lack of dynamic set-pieces to rival, say, *CoD4*'s desert chopper drop, or *Fallout 3*'s real-time nuclear detonation. What it represents is an experience of unparalleled graphical fidelity, and intensity, that no-one has experienced before. In short, perhaps the best reason to buy a PS3.





(9) Tower of power Shoot each red bit as it's revealed and the tower will explode dramatically. Job well done.

"Relief was soon replaced with a tingling delight"

(5) Leap of faith This idiot's jumping directly into our sights. But he's a beautifully-animated idiot.

Scene 04 The Helghast in the 2007 trailer are actually a lot better than they were in the pre-rendered trailer. They're more detailed and their death animations are more elaborate. The lighting effects from your muzzle flash are nicer, too.

Scene 05 This is where the direction of the trailer changes completely. Your commander in the 2005 trailer is more aggressive and orders you to pick up a rocket launcher. In the 2007 one he's crouched and gives you a mission objective.

Scene 06 The end of each demo was similar in that they both contained a massive explosion. In the 2005 one it was a Helghast ship crashing into a bridge, and in 2007 it's an Arc Tower. Both look stunning, but the pre-rendered one wins. Boo.

PS3

Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Potentially the deepest game on PS3

ON THE DISC
See the *GTAIV* trailer in HD (Xbox 360)

Fair cop The police work in teams and chatter over the radio – oh, and you can blow up their cars. And petrol stations.

JUST THE FACTS?

What we know

- **Targeting system** is snappier, with lock-to-cover moves and blind shots. Powerful weapons like Uzis really look and feel different.
- **Open top jeeps,** security vans, PCJ 600s, limos and buses will all feature.
- **Mobile phone** lets you arrange meetings, send texts, take photos and access multi-player modes.
- **Guns harder** to acquire, so buy from mobile vendors, or survival nuts in Alderney (New Jersey).
- **Internet cafe** lets you apply for jobs, plus play 'Gamer Zone' mini-games.

What we need to know

- **How will** your mobile-phone be used for multi-player? Will players be able to drop in at any time in hunt 'n' seek online play?
- **What role** does choice and consequence play? Will there be multiple paths – Rockstar refuse to comment.
- **How do** rooftop chases work? Buildings have working fire escape ladders.
- **Will there** be a working underground system? Manholes suggest yes...

Grand Theft Auto IV

Taxis, net cafes, guns... and new secrets revealed

Dan Dawkins

GTAIV's 'problem' – and it's a good problem – is that it dares you to expect, and *believe*, the impossible. No other series, bar maybe *MGS*, has the pedigree or mystique to create such unrealistic expectations. So it's oddly sobering that when you see *GTAIV* running for the first time, it's still a *game* – however thrilling, impressive or ambitious – subject to rules, menus and graphical limitations. *GTAIV* might creak under the weight of its own expectations, but it's singularly unique, capable of cementing its place in history irrespective of human flaws.

GTAIV's depth and scale is reflected in the starkly contrasting conclusions of the in-game demos we've seen so far. The first, a relatively action-free atmosphere piece, ends with Niko resting his foot on the dockside, staring in awe at the city's sweeping panorama – from the towering skyscrapers, to the gritty dockside – pondering the mysteries, opportunities and tribulations ahead as evening sunlight bleaches the camera and dances across the lusciously rendered, lapping waves. The second, a bustling insight into everyday Liberty City life, containing a 'regular' mission, ends with Niko breathlessly pressed against a security desk, clutching an Uzi, as swarms of chattering FBI agents plot his demise. It's the root of *GTA*'s success – the juxtaposition of freedom and claustrophobia, of unparalleled natural beauty and grizzly man-made violence.

The new demo begins in Star Junction – Liberty City's version of Times Square – as the early morning traffic weaves, honks and bustles to the tune of

chattering pedestrians. The city feels *alive*, from the flashing neon billboards, to the steam gently rising from underfoot grills – the ambient detail far exceeding that of *GTA: San Andreas*. Niko uses his mobile (displayed in an icon on the bottom right, with wobbly reception bars, and service provider 'Whiz') to arrange a meeting with Little Jacob, a Jamaican arms dealer. Niko heads over the road (displaying accurate momentum as he shifts from a walk to a sprint) onto an awaiting NRGgoo bike – his helmet 'magically' appearing as he sits.

Free man

A car is parked in an alley, where a tap of ▭ causes Rasta Jacob to open the boot in a seamless cut-scene, unveiling a mobile version of Ammu-Nation. We sift through the regular selection of pistols, Uzis and AK-47s at familiar prices, and Jacob's car pulls off in real-time.

Niko heads to the street and – a series' first – whistles to hail a cab, as we marvel at the Bahama Mamas strip club in the background. (See 'How Taxis work'). We get out at the TW@ internet café, and another new feature is revealed.

We enter the building (seamlessly, without loading times), brushing past a group of teenagers, and tap ▭ to access a computer. The screen becomes an active homepage – we notice links for Personal Ads and Cars – before Niko clicks to apply for a job. Rumours persist you can play the game 'honestly', holding down a job to earn cash, but in this situation we're applying to be a lawyer as part of a mission. Niko scrolls through his, probably doctored, CV (We note he was "captain of the shooting

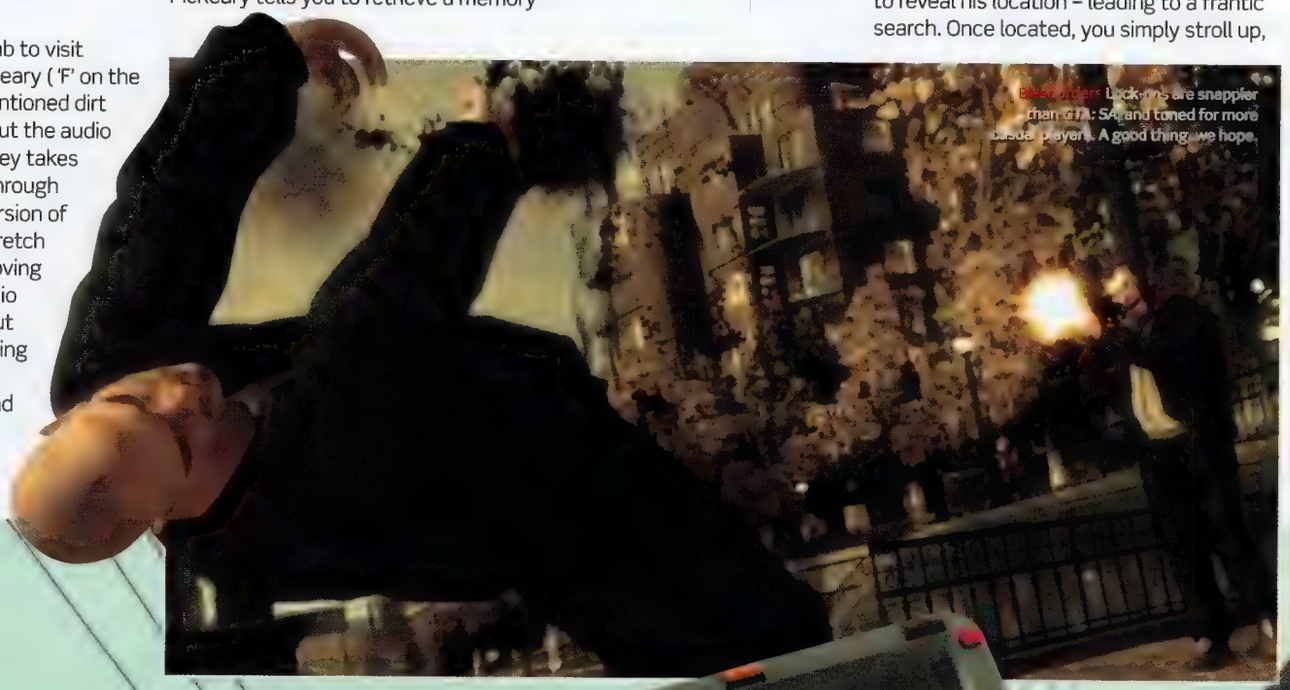
"*GTAIV* dares you to expect and believe the impossible"

team"), before sending it off. No sooner have we got outside than Karen from the lawyers calls to arrange an interview – a scenario tweaked for our demo, you'll usually have to wait longer. An alarm symbol appears on-screen, reading '12.00 Thursday' – a neat reminder.

Cop for this

With time to kill, we hail a cab to visit crooked copper Francis McReary ('F' on the radar), who has some unmentioned dirt on Niko (Rockstar blanked out the audio on the cut-scene). Our journey takes us past gangs of hoodies, through lush Middle Park (*GTAIV*'s version of Central Park), roadworks, stretch limos and a security van (Moving hold-ups? We'll see). The radio stations are under wraps, but we hear reggae (K-Jah?), Swing (classic Big Band music) and indie/pop (by an underground modern act) – plus there's some amusing chat about 'mummification' and a TV show where a kid finds a battle suit and has to make out with sexy robotic pirates. We get out at a harbour-side park, with hot dog vendors and punks, as bystanders drop shopping bags and laze about reading.

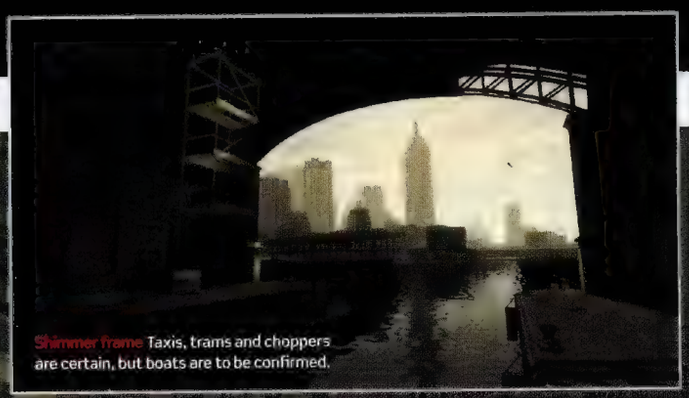
Step into the orange target circle (like all *GTA* games), to initiate a cut-scene where McReary tells you to retrieve a memory stick with compromising images of him, before killing the lawyer, Tom Goldberg. We steal a Comet sports car (you can really feel the performance difference), and follow a solid line on the radar to our target. Surveying a packed crowd from a viewing station, you need to ring your mystery foe to reveal his location – leading to a frantic search. Once located, you simply stroll up,



Bloodsuckers Lock-ons are snappier than GTA: SA and toned for more casual players. A good thing, we hope.

How the Wanted system works

The Wanted system affects the radius of the police search – the more stars, the wider the hunt. A red ring appears in the centre of the radar, and you have to break clear of it to escape. Cue madcap car chases, on-foot rooftop leaps and covert car swapping to lose your tail. The police operate on line of sight, so basic stealth principles apply. Rumour – they'll use dogs too...



Shimmer frame Taxis, trams and choppers are certain, but boats are to be confirmed.

How taxis work

Hail one (whistle, or wave arms), tap ○ to enter and choose your destination on the fare meter. You're treated to an atmospheric, multi-angle (including a lush wheel-cam, exposing the intricate wheel hubs) city tour. Traffic throbs, as your 40-something immigrant driver weaves in real-time. You can 'Trip Skip' at any time, or press ⊗ to speed up, paying double fare. As an indication, our five-minute journey, spanning a wide area, cost $52.

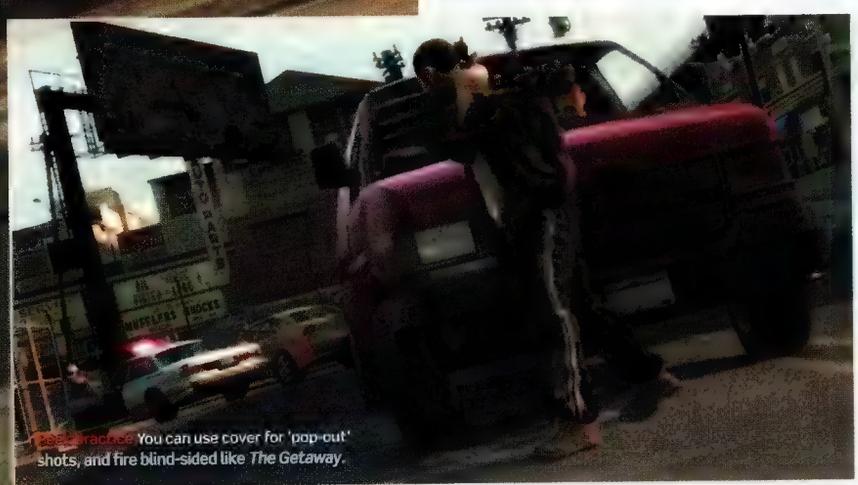
Morning glory The time of day creates subtle lighting effects.

The Empire State building by night

pull your gun (he cowers and puts his hands up), before you kill him and retrieve the card. Pedestrians flee in terror, as your Wanted bar raises to Two stars and the local police take pursuit (see 'How the Wanted system works').

After a furious chase, you head to Perseus to buy clothes for your job interview (load times are *way* better than *San Andreas*). You head to Chinatown, via Amethyst Street (all the streets are named after metals or elements) and buzz the intercom of Goldman, Ligner and Shyster. You check in at the swanky reception, and are led to Goldman's office. After an amusing 'interview' – "Guns don't kill people, videogames do," Goldman quips – you pop a bullet in his head, and things really kick off. You need to fight your way through the multi-level building, using cover intelligently (See How Shooting Works'), before emerging at the security desk facing impossible odds – as mentioned earlier – and making a dash for freedom. Suffice to say, our demo ends with Niko bleeding under an FBI van.

We could write another 1000 words just about incidental details, each of which could spawn *another* 1000 words of rich interaction. As Rockstar say, this demo is just one of a thousand stories that unfold every day in Liberty City, and we suspect *GTAIV*'s ultimate trump card – freedom and consequence of choice – won't be played until it launches on October 19.



Best practice You can use cover for 'pop-out' shots, and fire blind-sided like *The Getaway*.

PSM3 Reckons

If you adjust your expectations and accept some of *GTA*'s old demons *may* rear their head, it's potentially the first truly next-gen game.

PS3

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Players 1 | **Genre** Survival horror
FYI Chris is part of a new agency called the BSAA.

ON THE DISC
See this very trailer on the disc next month!

01 Things seems normal as the locals go about their day...

02 ...but bad things are going on in the back alleys.

Resident Evil 5

Faster. Nastier. Everywhere. Scariest zombies ever?

Andy Kelly

This time they can sprint. But we knew that already. With Dawn Of The Dead and 28 Days Later adding 'gazelle-quick-zombies' to our list of bedtime worries, it was almost inevitable that *Resi 5* would speed up its undead. The teaser trailer hinted at it – and the new showreel at E3 confirmed it. But that's not the scariest part.

T-Virus or Las Plagas? That's the question. *Resi 4* ditched the ebola-related zombie disease for Las Plagas, a parasite that gained direct control of its hosts, but we're predicting that this game sees the Umbrella corporation and their genetic experiments making a comeback. See, the Plagas allow their hosts to handle tools, work together in groups and operate under the control of a 'queen' - all things seen in the trailer. In the latter stages of T-Virus infection, on the other hand, victims turn extra aggressive, jump and sprint, and start bleeding from the eyes - also seen in the trailer. So what's going on? Perhaps a combination of *both* - created by Ava's bosses after she returned a sample of the Plagas to them at the end of the last game. Worrying.

Village people

Meanwhile - at least in the early going - Chris Redfield, back in the lead role, seems blissfully unbothered by it all. Wandering around the game's African-looking village (Capcom aren't confirming this is where it's set, though) he

03 That's all we get. What's going on? Can't wait to find out.

04 Now Chris gets surrounded – and takes a kicking.

03 Chris – yes, it's him – seems oblivious in the sunshine...

04 ...but Mr Baghead and pal are stirring up trouble in town.

doesn't even seem to have noticed the zombies, and is more troubled by the midday sun. Keep watching the trailer, though, and you'll see him get knocked to the floor and shoed by ferocious, sickle-wielding locals. New producer Jun Takeuchi (best known for his work on *Onimusha*) says his inspirations include Black Hawk Down, and the influence is clear, with whole crowds of people running at the camera and hacking away at our fallen hero. And that's the scariest thing – this time, in the direct sunlight, there's nowhere to hide and you can see *everything* – including the horrifying return of *Resi 4*'s Mr Baghead. Terrifying.

PSM3 Reckons

Gameplay details are scarce like leprechauns, but only an asteroid-sized disaster can stop this being brilliant. More soon, please, Capcom.

05 The locals start tooling up, and Mr Baghead joins in.

07 Meanwhile, our mate is showing signs of infection.

06 They're throwing rocks. It's all very Black Hawk Down.

PS3

Pub Konami | **Dev** KCEJ
Players 1 | **Stealth shooter**
FYI Snake is the only playable character. *Definitely.*

ON THE DISC
More of *MGS4* on next issue's disc
PS3 Coming Soon

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

A few answers – and a lot more questions...

Joel Snape

You all know the drill by now. Metal Gear trailers are typically one part philosophical musing on the nature of war, one part teasing voiceover, a dash of intrigue for the conspiracy theorists and three parts absolutely enormous fight. It drives the internet crazy and it keeps us all excited, and so it's no surprise that the latest glimpse of what Koj is calling his last *Metal Gear* follows this recipe to the letter.

The philosophy? Simple. In the 21st century, war is the driving force of the international economy. Gangs of mercenaries fight it out, but there's a twist – thanks to nano-technology, they can be directly controlled by their paymasters.

Worse, they can be taken over: as returning enemy Liquid Ocelot demonstrates on a Foxhound squad being led by *MGS*'s Meryl Silverburgh. Kojima-san said that he'd like every surviving, significant *MGS* character to come back for the grand finale, and it's no surprise that Otacon's back too, working with Snake and Roy Campbell to eliminate Liquid. Vamp and Raiden are back too, but there are other questions – who's the masked, white-haired soldier who's immune to the nanobots? Will Olga's son – captured by the Patriots, and now presumably seven years old – return? Does Otacon blame Raiden for his sister's death? Expect some sort of closure all round.

Older and out

Meanwhile, Snake's looking

Ocelot's looking more like Liquid Snake as his mentor's arm takes over his brain

Back once again Meryl from MGS returns (centre), but the new Foxhound members are a mystery.

"Kojima would like every character back for the finale"

HIDEODROME

Stop press! MGS4 hands on!

As we went to press, Kojima-san showed off all-new gameplay in Tokyo...

Roll deep If Snake hides in a barrel, he'll be moderately shielded from bullets, but the clanging of his knees on the metal will alert enemies. He can also roll down hills to take out enemies - it'll make him sick, but a flick through a scuff mag sorts him out...

Stand still Snake's Octo-Cam helps him blend into his surroundings semi-automatically. Hug a wall or hit the floor and his suit changes to match the surface he's on - but he can also shift patterns manually to look like a statue.

Oh, nuts Now Snake can relieve soldiers of their guns with a new CQC disarm. He can also take them via holdups, which are more realistic - Snake can frisk enemies with one hand with his gun still drawn. He's also got a new death grip to the groin for afterwards...

creakier than ever, with the Foxdie virus in his blood finally taking its toll. He's affected by the nanomachines that take over the Foxhounds – although he manages to fight them off – and although we know he'll still be able to pull off CQC moves, Kojima-san's hinted that the "psychological impact of battle" will take its toll somehow. We've already seen Snake contemplating eating a bullet in an earlier trailer – with the new one showing him claiming to be "just an old killer, hired to do some wetwork" – it's tempting to speculate that the consequences of his actions are finally starting to play on our hero's conscience. The final mystery to ponder is the upside-down sevens in the title – a reference to the 07/07/07 anniversary of MGS, or something else? And then, of course, there's the enormous fight – but for that, we'll turn you over to Raiden...

Scar tissue

Vamp's still sporting a scar from one of Raiden's bullets in *MGS2*, while Raiden's unlikely to have forgiven him for killing Otacon's sister. Raiden's rocking his new stealth suit, and a pair of heels that he can use to grab objects and slash at enemies. But Vamp's invested in some pointy shoes of his own, and does a bit of vicious tap dancing on Raiden...

He must have waxed his chest in the *MGS2* days...

Magic Vamp

At the end of the trailer, there's one more surprise – Vamp, last seen at the end of *Metal Gear Solid 2*, is facing off with Raiden. "You too... immortal?" murmurs Vamp quietly. "No. I just don't fear death." hisses the peroxide blonde. The pair go at it, with Vamp slinging out half a dozen knives – which are easily deflected by our hero...

Twinsellowed Both lads have got better at fighting, though Vamp keeps his flamenco stylings.

Flesh and metal

Before getting into it properly, Raiden slices his way through a pair of Gekkous – the two-legged tanks that are the missing link between Metal Gears and infantry. The twist is, they're organic – as well as mooing like cows, hissing like cats and clopping like horses, they bleed when they're cut. And there are loads of them!

Final cut Raiden's now packing a pair of swords and a bag of knives, rather than the HF blade from *MGS2*.

Head to head

After a balletic battle, Raiden takes a leaf out of Yoshimitsu's book and shoves his sword through his own stomach in order to nail Vamp. As we've seen in previous trailers, Raiden doesn't really bleed – an offshot of his makeover? Are his cybernetics a suit, or part of his skin, like Ninja's? Can he kill Vamp? And will we actually like him this time?

PSM3 Reckons

Confusing but brilliant – expect nothing less than a tear-jerking, brutal swansong for the elder statesman of PlayStation.

ETA MAR 08

PS3

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Assassinate people during the Crusades.

ON THE DISC
See Assassin's Creed in the disc now

Meet be shove The crowd have three levels of agitation which make you more visible to guards.

Assassin's Creed

Don't believe the tripe – this could be a flawed classic

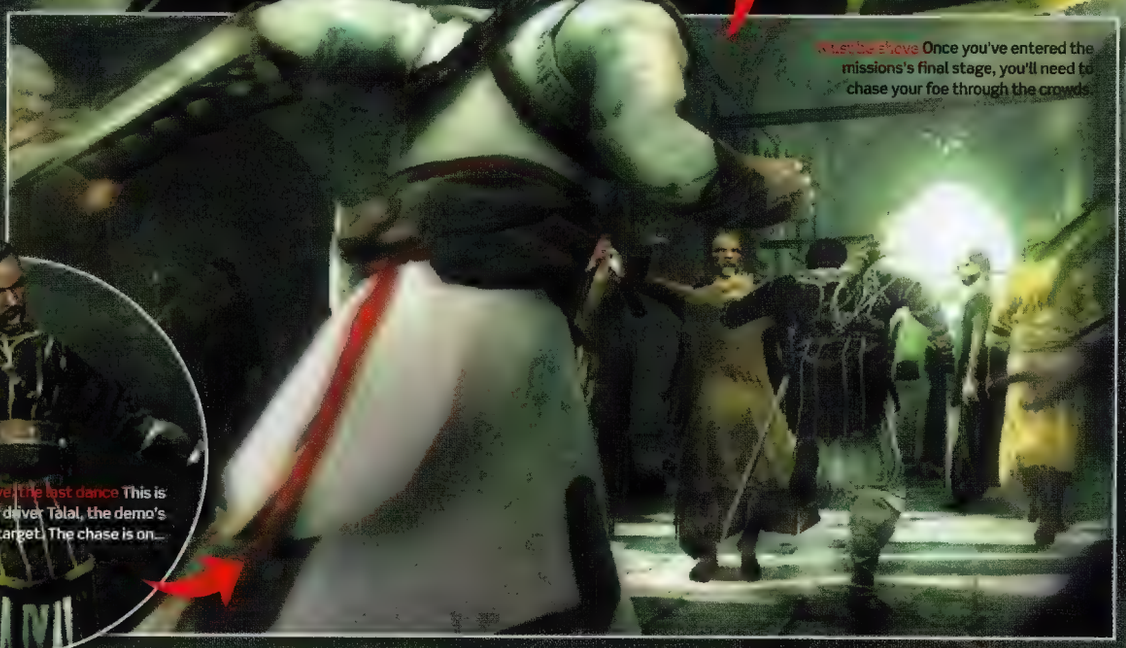
Dan Dawkins

Metal Gear creator Hideo Kojima thinks *Assassin's Creed* is "fantastic" – unsurprising given that it's the only game as ambitious, thrilling and *fiddly* as his own. After playing a full level at E3, *Assassin*'s feels awkward *and* intuitive – one second you're effortlessly speed-running over rooftops and dispatching guards, the next head-butting walls, cursing the camera and flailing wildly. We suspect it'll be easier with extended practice – after all, *MGS3* took about five hours to feel remotely natural – but the elaborate controls may initially scare casual players.

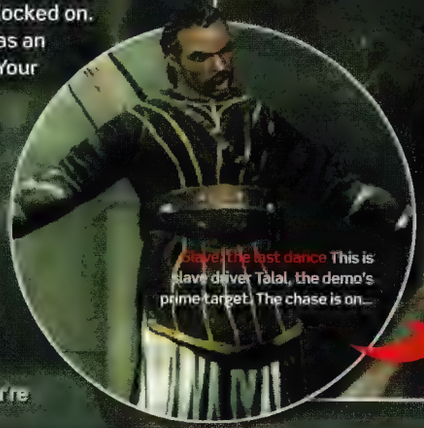
Not in control

It pays little respect to convention – instead of holding L1 to lock-on, you simply tap it on/off to engage combat mode, which takes adjustment, especially since you can't always tell whether you're locked on. All controls are context-sensitive, with different abilities available when you're locked on. The L1 button is used as an 'Aggression Modifier'. Your main buttons are displayed in a tiny icon (e.g. ⊗ to blend into the crowd, ◎ for push, □ to punch), but hold L1 and they're aggressively modified (e.g. ⊗ to free run, ◎ to barge, □ to attack). 'Punch' may become 'assassinate' when you're holding the right weapon, and alter according to where you're stood, and by whom.

It sounds baffling, but you do adjust. The payoff is that the lead character is hugely flexible, and there's a variety of ways to tackle any situation. In our demo, we reached our target by scaling roofs and strangling guards, but



Meet be shove Once you've entered the mission's final stage, you'll need to chase your foe through the crowds



Slave, the last dance This is slave driver Talal, the demo's prime target. The chase is on...

Divine leaper The Leap of Faith looks [illegible] but we're yet to see its practical use in missions

Neigh bores The horse sections are more linear than we thought – which might actually help

"Importantly, it *feels* like a truly next-gen experience"

we could have sneaked past disguised as a monk or just battled through.

The combat isn't as complex as feared. Whack ⓐ for standard swipes, but with ⓛ engaged (this time for Defensive mode), you can do one-hit counters – a bit like *Onimusha*'s Issen attacks, but with far more generous timing. There's a variety of gruesome counter-kills (like dodging and tripping a foe in one movement before impaling him), plus dodge moves and pushes – you can shove foes into ladders, which collapse on them. Weapons, selected with the D-pad , include a sword, throwing knives and assassin's blade – Altair's signature weapon that he lost a finger to accommodate – with context-sensitive kills for each weapon.

Free running is intuitive, except when you need to make a bigger leap – once, we vaulted three small ledges before tumbling off a roof. When you jump and cling onto ledges, the jump key becomes a backward leap, not climb, leading to more falls. You can climb anything with handholds by charging ⓧ below any wall, before entering free climb. The much-trumpeted Leap Of Faith is performed from specific high spots – rather than crude flashing icons, these high spots are indicated by fluttering pigeons.

We also got a brief glimpse of the horse-riding plain (like Hyrule Field in *Zelda*) which links the cities, engaging in horse-mounted combat. The rumoured 'twist' – that the game isn't set in 1192, but contains futuristic elements, with you retrieving essential DNA strands – is confirmed by the demo. All characters 'flicker' with a Matrix-style code haze, and the screen almost fades to white when you lose sight of your target in the final chase – suggesting a break in the timeline. The demo's final scene sees your fallen foe, Talal the slaver, suggesting he isn't that evil, and that you're a pawn in a more sinister plot. At key points in the game, the entire screen 'glitches', and you can tap any button to retrieve brief plot clues.

The need for *Creed*

Control quibbles aside, it's visually impressive, with hordes of villagers and fluid animation – the draw distance from the Leap Of Faith points is staggering, and anything you see can be reached. Most importantly it *feels* like a fresh experience: marrying next-gen visuals to a complex set of interactions over a near-unprecedented scale. Clumsy as we were, we wanted to keep playing, relishing the thrill of the unknown. As Hideo Kojima's games attest, it isn't always about flawless mechanics, but the bravery to attempt something new.

PSM3 Reckons

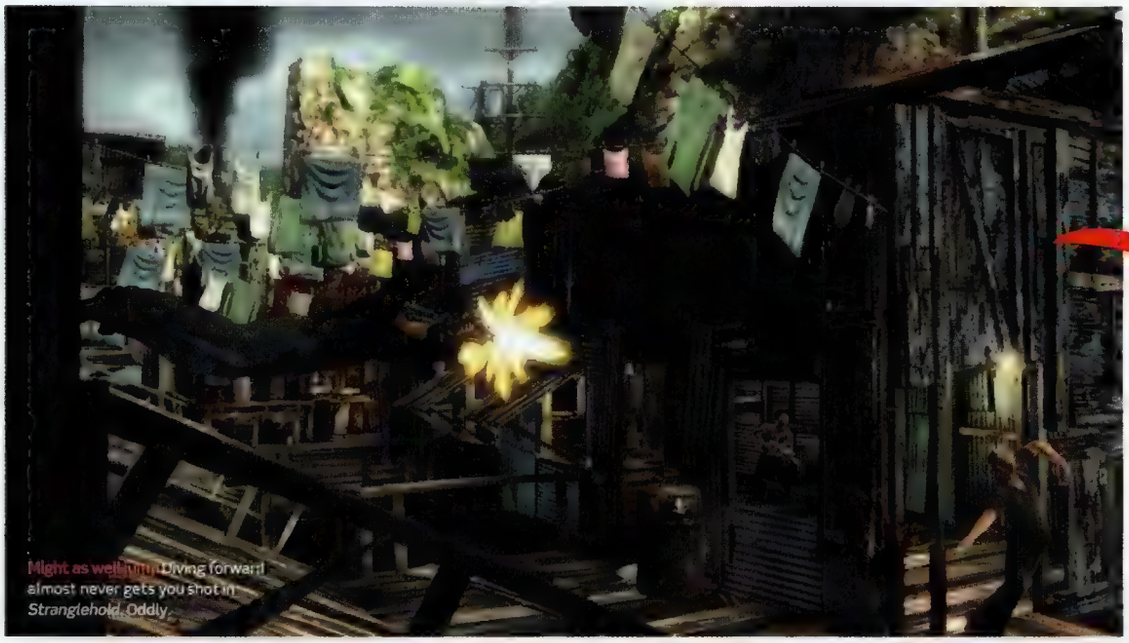
Quibbles aside, we like what we've seen. We keenly await final code, because if the mission balance is right, this could be a flawed classic.

ETA NOV 2007

PS3

Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway
Players 1-4 | **Shooter**
FYI In China, Hard Boiled's known as 'God Of Guns'.

ON THE DISC
See more of Stranglehold on this month's disc.



Might as well jump Diving forward almost never gets you shot in *Stranglehold*. Oddly.

Stains massive Don't worry, a tap of the D-pad should regenerate Fat's health and tidy up those wounds.

John Woo Presents Stranglehold

Joel Snape

One man, 10 million bullets... and a lot of broken glass.

QUOTE
Developer insight

"In movies, my action director constantly has to remind me that people would need to reload. In the game, you can shoot as much as you want without reloading. It's more like a cartoon and fun."

John Woo
Executive Producer.

Give the guy a gun, he thinks he's superman," moans Inspector Tequila's long-suffering superintendent in Hard Boiled, the prequel to *Stranglehold*. "Give him two and he thinks he's God." Yeah? Well, go easy on him, chief: we know how he feels.

For a start, we're in his shoes. Because in *Stranglehold*, you *are* Chow Yun Fat, circa 1992 – before Bulletproof Monk and the Pirates cameo, back when he was the toothpick-chewing, .45-packing king of guns. It's his voice in the game, but more importantly, it's his face – every contortion and grimace is vintage Fat. Leave him alone and he'll stare up at the camera, get in a Mexican standoff and you're treated to a shot of him composed and calm despite the guns pointing at his face. Activate the 'barrage' power-up and you get Fat 'doing' steely determination as he slaps in a brace of fresh clips and gets ready to go full-auto mental. And, maybe best of all, set off the all-destroying spin attack and you get a bit of calm in the storm, a burst of soothing music and a saintly look from Fat as he mows down every last man in the room. Woo's trademark doves flutter everywhere as everyone drops like they've been detonated from the inside. What a hero.

No-armed bandit By the time this fight's over, all those beautiful slot machines will be dead.

Trigger happy

Besides, even god might get a twinge of conscience about causing this kind of destruction. Codenamed Massive D, *Stranglehold*'s physics system builds on *Psi-Ops*' Havok engine to offer the sort of carnage impossible on last-gen machines. We've seen the tea house and museum before, but the new levels offer even more devastation. In the penthouse, the damage is mostly cosmetic: fruit machines and aquariums spit out coins and goldfish as they get caught in the crossfire, gongs clang when they take stray bullets and entire chunks of scenery collapse under sustained fire. By the time everyone's dead, there isn't a bit of scenery in the room that hasn't taken some damage. In the slums level. By contrast, there isn't too much decoration: the destructible scenery forms a key component of the gameplay. When enemies take cover, the question isn't whether you can shoot them or not but how much ammo you're prepared to throw away – with most hiding places made of wood, there aren't many places your bullets can't go. Key chunks of scenery glow white or are marked with yellow paint – these can be shot to trigger chain reactions that open up new areas or take out enemies. In the slum area, there's a chance to start rockslides that take out enemies, or – in one area – sweep away whole gangs of thugs with a tidal wave.

Even better are the explosions – slums feature dozens of drug labs that blow up huge chunks of scenery when shot. It's

Just say no This is what happens when you blow up a drugs lab. Steer clear of the explosive heroin, kids.

"The new levels of *Stranglehold* offer even more devastation"

possible to see them off once you've cleared out each area, but much more fun to sight up on them through gaps in dilapidated metalwork and trigger the kaboom with a precision shot.

Fat's entertainment

With the difficulty tweaked and balanced, it's clear that the key to *Stranglehold* is momentum. Sure, you can just about muddle through most bits hiding, waiting for your Tequila time meter – that's what lets you slow down everything but Fat's reactions – and picking off enemies one by one. But that way, you'll never build up enough juice to set off a Tequila Bomb, and you'll be scraping through each level. Counter-intuitive as it might seem, the best way to survive is to dash through, diving around in the open and making use of all the scenic features. When something glows, the best bet is to prod L1 and see what happens – Tequila will sprint up, slide along or bounce off it, shooting all the time. Although it might seem like you're an easier target dangling from a swinging chandelier or riding a food cart, the difficulty's been tweaked so that

Sustained fire Tequila can't carry massive amounts of ammo, so he has to run around and retrieve it a lot.

DODGY

Point blank

The art of the Mexican standoff

Put it down! In John Woo films, Mexican standoffs are a tense counterpoint to the main action, as everyone has a chat with their pieces drawn. In the game, it's simpler than that – when Fat gets ambushed by a gang of goons, you simply use the left analogue stick to dodge bullets in super slow-mo while aiming with the right. Midway are currently 'thinking about' using Sixaxis for more instinctive dodging – which is good, because it's a bit tricky...

Stand there if you must, but running up those banisters nets extra points.

Aiming offers just the right amount of helpful auto-locking – challenging, but not too easy.

Scarpering while the scenery gets chewed up behind you is one of *Stranglehold*'s great joys.

the opposite's true – as long as you're a moving target, you're unlikely to get seriously ventilated. More importantly, by doing combos of moves you'll build up huge chunks of Tequila Bomb power, allowing you to either wipe out everyone in the area or rejuvenate yourself with a chunk of health. Health packs are liberally splashed around the levels, too – so as long as you keep moving, you'll be OK. Using the D-pad

In the neck

One of the most impressive things about *Stranglehold* – easily seen in Precision Shot mode – is how well enemies react to being hit in different 'bits'. Get them in the throat and they clutch their trachea, get them in the eye and they topple instantly and aim for the arse and they do a little dance. Hours of faintly disturbing fun.

Let it bleed When Fat takes a pasting, his suit gets covered in blood. To the dry cleaners, then.

"One upsetting omission is vehicle-based levels"

to activate Tequila bombs is instinctive enough, so there's never any real reason to slow down.

Firing dry

The question is, will this be enough? Even with Mexican standoffs spliced in, spending an entire game doing nothing but drilling goons in sharp suits seems like the sort of thing that might get dull after a few hours. One upsetting omission is vehicle-based levels – though we were promised these months ago, they've been abandoned unfinished, though Midway are still planning to release them in an expansion pack due around Christmas. The sole nod to variety we've seen is a helicopter level that's spectacular, but just the sort of chopper duck-shoot you've already seen in every *Grand Theft Auto*. Set-pieces break up the action – one bit sees you protecting a jazz band during a furious gunfight, for instance, while another bit sees you blowing up drug boats – hopefully there's plenty more of this.

The other big question is how the multi-player will work. Midway now tell us that they've managed to make Tequila time slow-motion work with several players, but they're staying tight-lipped as to exactly how, and we've yet to play it.

Stranglehold gets the benefit of the doubt, though. Games have been doing the bullet-dodging, slow-diving, dual-wielding thing for years, but we've always known who they were ripping off. Give Inspector Tequila two guns and he thinks he's God. Give *us* two guns and we pretend we're Chow Yun Fat. After all, which one's cooler?

PSM3 Reckons

Can you make a fulfilling game out of nothing but shooting? Midway reckon so, and if they keep the pace up they could be right.

Pub EA | **Dev** Pandemic Studios
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Free Roaming
FYI Our first hands-on with the military *GTA*

ON THE DISC
See more of *Mercenaries 2* on Sale Friday

Team building

One of the major new things in *Mercenaries 2* is the opportunity to build your own Private Military Company. Build your headquarters and you'll be able to recruit other mercenaries to join your company. But they won't be cheap dates. Each recruit will need you to fulfil certain requirements before they'll join up.

Different recruits offer different skills and benefits to your company. Hire a helicopter pilot, for example, and you'll be able to get lifts to various drop-off points (once you've managed to secure the landing zones).

Other recruits bring new vehicles and supply drops to the mix, or give you better relations with the various factions. You'll even be able to hack into other factions' defence systems in order to launch attacks with long-range weaponry.

You can also stockpile munitions and supplies in your armoury, talk to mercs you've recruited and chat with Fiona Taylor, your primary support operative, who returns from the first game. Fiona is also gathering intelligence and will tell you when breakthroughs occur as you hunt for the various bounties in the game.

Brash, tank, brawny enough to take a beating in a gunfight
CHRIS
Fast, stealthy and versatile ex-MI6 agent
JENNIFER
Fearless hardnut with an appetite for destruction
MATTIAS

QUOTE

Developer insight

Jonathan Zamkoff, Senior Producer
"We had a real-life mercenary as a consultant. One of us asked how many kills he had and he he lifted up his trouser leg to reveal a skull and a series of barcode tattoos, and he says 'Each of these represents five verified kills.' And he's got 13 of them... He was a lunatic."

"In the distance you hear the crack of gunfire and see muzzle flashes"

Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

It really is going to set your world alight

Jon Hamblin

Here in the heat of the South American jungle, the air is thick and oppressive. Exotic birds flit between the trees. Wildlife rustles on the floor. It's a beautiful scene, marred only slightly by the two whacking great tanks blowing the treads off each other.

Not for long, though. A signal beacon flies away from a shadowy figure in the trees and a stealth bomber shoots overhead and drops a biblical payload on the scene, wiping out a huge area of jungle. As the air fills with ash, the figure steps into the sunlight, picking his nose. It's Mattias Nilson. He was the star of the original *Mercenaries* (PSM58, 88%), EA's first crack at the free-roaming destruction genre. And he's back, mum-distressing bad habits and all.

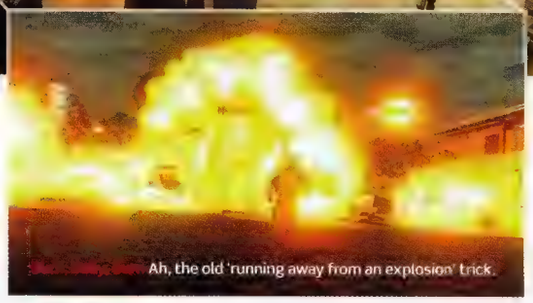
Mercenary me

For the unitiated, mercenaries live every day as if it's their last. They travel to the most hellish political blackspots in the world, killing for whomever offers the biggest pile of cash. You might get a bullet in the head at any time, but you might also get really, sickeningly rich. We still wouldn't advise you try it, though.

Having already had a bash at exploring this world with the first game, developers Pandemic are keen to try again on the next generation. This time, the action has moved away from schoolyard squabbles to all-out war, from the Korean demilitarised zone to the Venezuelan jungle, and so the plot has grown up accordingly. This time, it's all about black gold.

Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in South America, and since the oil market's collapse in the early '80s, it's been in constant political turmoil, rife with corruption and military coups. Pandemic have used this as the starting point for a story deeper and more involved than before, involving a drug lord named Ramon Solano. He's orchestrated a coup, but more to the point, he's made it personal. After hiring Mattias for a mission, he tried to kill him, destroyed his reputation in the mercenary world and, worst of all, refused to pay. It's payback time, but before you can take down Solano, you'll have to build your reputation back up again, starting your own Private Military Company with your rock-hard operator buddies.

The game dynamic is the same as the previous title – you get a huge world to explore, missions from various factions to undertake and stacks of big guns. The world is far bigger and prettier, of course, and offers more options for your barely controlled chaos, but this is still the *Mercenaries* we know and love.



Ah, the old 'running away from an explosion' trick.

The three characters from the first game – Mattias, brawny Yank Chris Jacobs and versatile Brit Jennifer Mui – are all there from the start, but there's a new character, Eva Navarro, whom you can recruit during the story. Gameplay still revolves around getting missions, ordering supply drops and air strikes and bundling smelly, trussed tyrants into helicopters. But on our recent playthrough at Pandemic's offices in Los Angeles, it was clear that this reworking of the first game is far more effective than a ground-up redesign would have been.

The first title was a great game hampered by the limitations of its platform. Now, walking around the streets of 'Venezuela', it's obvious how PS3 has enabled Pandemic to up their game. Buildings look suitably cracked and faded, bin bags, abandoned market stalls and burned-out vehicles are strewn across the pavements. In the distance you can hear the crack of gunfire and see muzzle flashes from hotel balconies as the People's Liberation Army of Venezuela take pot shots at Ramon Solano's forces.

Soldiers of fortune

We're on a mission to take out a few pockets of Solano's soldiers, holed up in buildings throughout the city, and we've tracked some of them down to this spot. We could call in one of the many air strikes available, from cluster bombs to napalm to the MOAB (Mother Of All Bombs). We could attempt to pick the baddies off one by one. But instead we unstrap the RPG from Mattias' shoulder and take aim. A few 85mm rocket grenades later, the entire building creaks and groans before sagging to the ground, the debris actually taking out several nearby soldiers. Being used to purely cosmetic building destruction in games, it's almost shocking to see bits of building with weight and presence, and the strategic implications (say, dropping a building on a nearby tank to prevent its pursuit) are staggering.

But there are two more nests to take out. Chucking a beacon results in a heavily modified monster truck being dropped off that allows us to roll over barricades and

Tanks a lot There are more than 100 vehicles to use including planes and boats.

FACTION STATIONS

Venezuela: Faction City

The six different groups in *World in Flames*

THE PIRATES

A group of violent criminals, these bullies are trying to profit from the chaotic conflict in any way they can.

UNIVERSAL PETROLEUM

The main sponsors of the mercenaries in Venezuela, Universal are an oil corporation with interests in the region. They have lots of cash and excellent equipment, but are decidedly shady

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY OF VENEZUELA

One of the groups with whom Mattias initially becomes friendly, these rebels are attempting to overthrow chief bad guy Ramon Solano and kick foreign countries out of Venezuela to boot.

THE VENEZUELAN ARMY

After he took power in a coup, the army is controlled by drug lord Ramon Solano, so their main interest is in keeping their tyrant in power. The only out-and-out villains of the piece.

THE ALLIED NATIONS

Representing the Western super-powers, the Allies are ostensibly in Venezuela as a peace-keeping force, but they're really more interested in protecting their countries' business interests in the region.

THE CHINESE ARMY

Far from home, but unwilling to let the Allied Nations control the supply of oil in the region, the Chinese are attempting to wrestle its reserves for themselves.

roadblocks. Unfortunately, we quickly discover it's no match for the Universal Petroleum-owned Mantis tank that we meet downtown, and we only survive thanks to a hasty, touching-cloth eject. Shrugging off the fall, we kill the tank's gunner and hijack it, prompting one of the new Bemani minigames, while your guy and the angry driver tussle for control of the vehicle. There are well over 100 vehicles in *World In Flames*, and the difficulty of the minigame varies according to what you're stealing. Gaining control of the tank, we track to our next target leaving a pile of bricks, mortar and dead soldiers behind us.

Twisted firestarter Grenades, guns, tanks, air strikes and plenty else is at your dispo

Time for a new ride. We call in the support helicopter for an ammo drop, but instead of opening the crate, we use the new *Just Cause*-style grapple function to grab onto the chopper. Zooming up the line, we throw the pilot to the ground, grab the controls and fly across the city to drop the MOAB on the last of Ramon's men. The result is one of the most visually punishing explosions seen in any console game to date. It's really quite spectacular.

Judging by what we've seen so far, Mercenaries 2 will stand toe to toe with almost anything on PS3. It looks, plays and feels like the raucous, immersive shooter it aims to be. More soon.

PSM3 Reckons

By refining a proven concept and slathering it in high-def visuals, it seems *Mercenaries 2* could earn Pandemic quite the payday.

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

48 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.

49 Text PSM3
Your texts exposed to the world.

50 Tech Ken
Ex-Sony guru answers your queries.

50 Poll Position
Vote – you'll see democracy in action.

51 MySpace
Our eight favourite readers this month.

52 Reader Reviews
Think we talk rubbish? You try it.

53 Right or Wrong?
Disagree with our scores? Say so.

53 YouTube
The best gamer videos out there.

PSM3 Wants You!

Post PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a game

Email PSM3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation Network Send to Team_PSM3_Mag

MySpace & the PSM3 blog Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

Can't we all just get along?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Instead of sitting back and actually taking a game for itself on its own terms, I find people are more concerned about whether something better than on rival machines, than if it's a decent game. Get a grip, people. All we have at the moment are ports or current/past generation-feeling games with nicer (albeit not best) graphics. The games we have at the moment are not worth all this fighting about because they aren't showing the true potential – of *any* system. When the good games come rolling out and no one is stuck in the 'new console' phase any more then we can actually consider which consoles are strong in particular areas – because to be honest I don't think one console can cover EVERYTHING that a 21st century gamer wants.

I own a PS3 because I liked my PS2. It plays games and that's all I care about. So I feel no need to go out of my way to buy another system. Right now I get to enjoy the last sprint of my PS2, with *God Of War 2*, *Canis Canem Edit* and *Tomb Raider Anniversary*, while PS3 is just gearing up for it's long and successful marathon.

This letter could be interpreted as a rant, but whatever. I'm a happy gamer and you all should be. For heck's sake, if you own a Playstation 3, Xbox 360 or whatever, just be glad you can afford it. I felt so guilty asking for a PS3 that I told my parents they shouldn't get me a present for my birthday this year, along with no pocket money from December 2006 until said birthday next month. I've stuck by it.

Rachel Hillier, email

> "I'm a happy gamer and you should all be. For heck's sake be glad"

While some slag off PS3, it's the strongest competitor, tech-wise (see how promising *Killzone 2* and *LBP* look), and when it finally hits its stride it'll prove it once and for all. But when it comes down to it, all the systems have their share of good games and gamers should be overjoyed that you've got such a choice, not bitching about the other formats. We're fans of PS3. We expect you are too. But that's no reason to hate 'rival' console owners, is it? We're with Rachel – just enjoy the games you're playing. You're lucky to have them.

Sister act Ah, feel the love. That's what games can do. But how will she play *PES* with her arms pinned to her sides?

Broken tape

My friend's PS3 broke.

He came round mine explaining that his PS3 just died for no reason. I asked him if he used any knackered games, DVDs or Blu-rays. He said no. I asked him if he dropped it. No, no, no.

So I went round his to have a look. He had put black duct tape over the air vents. All of them. I said "Why have you put duct tape over the vents?"

He replied, "I am really cautious about my PS3. I really look after it. I don't want dust getting inside it, so I covered up the holes to stop dust from getting in."

Luke Diton, London

Oh dear. That's quite a funny story you have there. Seriously, though, this didn't *really* happen, did it? If it did,

Duct up Why would you tape up your PS3?

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

What do you think the best thing in the Playstation Store is at the moment as I am not sure what to buy.

Daniel Squirrel, email
is that your real name? We'd say *Super Stardust*. You'll go *nuts* for it. Hmm. *Hmm*?

I haven't, and never will, put my hands near any Xbox. I would rather have my spudsack cut open and have hot coal shoved in my scrote.

Rockshox, email
We wouldn't. The Xbox 360 isn't actually *diseased*, you know.

Strange goings on

Dear PSM3 why do you keep going on about weird games like *Okami*? **Barry**

Because *Okami*'s one of the greatest games on PS2. But it all depends on what you view as 'weird'. *Metal Gear 3*'s hardly the sanest game around, but no-one ever dismisses that for being a bit peculiar.

What next?

What games should I get for my PS3? I've already got *MotorStorm* and *Resistance Fall Of Man*. **Jamie M**

Oblivion is probably the best game going on PS3. If you don't fancy that, try *Virtua Tennis 3*, *Virtua Fighter 5* or *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*.

Starry-eyed

How much will it cost to download tracks on *Singstar* for PS3? **Anon**

Sony haven't said yet. Any more than about a quid and we're of the opinion that it'll be too expensive. We hear they're aiming for itunes level prices.

Text us Send to 87103 and start your message with 'PSM3'.

get yourself some less thick, and/or safety conscious, friends sharpish.

Hawk flying high

I took a lot of interest in *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground* and thought, "Hey, I think I know what could make the best *Tony Hawk*'s ever."

My 10 suggestions for a NEW *Tony Hawk's* – by taking the best things out of the old ones...

1. Parkour (*American Wasteland*)
2. 'Nail the trick' (*Project 8*)
3. Creation options (*Underground*)
4. Task layouts (*THPS4*)
5. Free open world (*Project 8*)
6. Location (*American Wasteland*)
7. Cash (*American Wasteland*)
8. Storyline (*Underground*)
9. Realism (*Project 8*)
10. Humour (all *Tony Hawk* games)

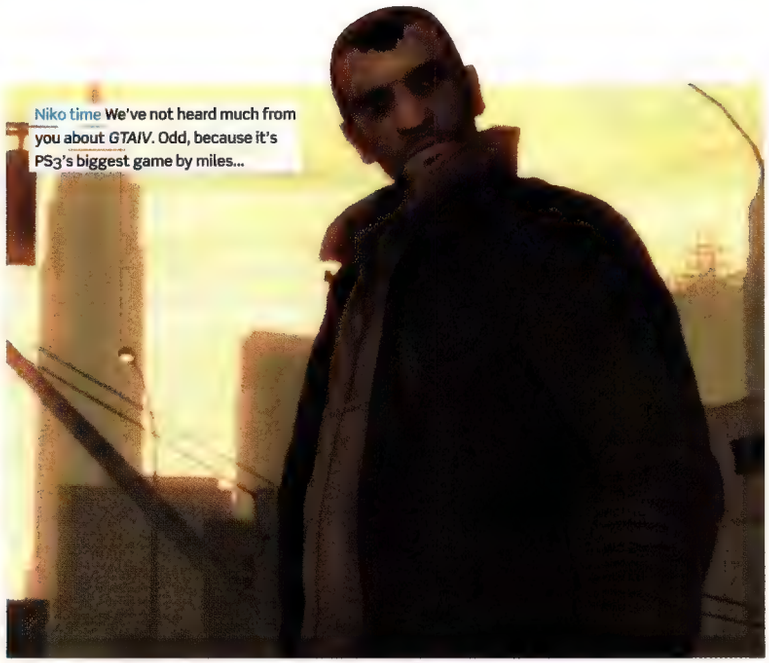
And that's all my suggestions...

Chris Louch, Dundee

Well, we'll wait and see what *Proving Ground* actually brings. It looks impressive so far, though. It'll be a damn sight more than *Downhill Jam* (see page 79) we hope...

Sexism isn't as appreciated as it should be in this modern world. **Jonathan Waters, email**

Any lady readers know Jonathan Waters? Is he really sexist or just being 'ironical'? Do let us know.



Niko time We've not heard much from you about *GTAIV*. Odd, because it's PS3's biggest game by miles...

Trailer splash

Here are a few things I noticed in the new *GTA4* trailer...

The bridge toll costs a whopping $85.00. The big wheel in the theme park is called the Liberty Eye. You can see somebody being beaten to death in the basketball park near the end. The train is going to 187th Street, Washington Heights. And, finally, the public look completely unaware of what's going on around them. If you saw a police shootout across the street, you'd either watch, run or both. This is the only disappointing thing I've seen so far.

Michael Doherty, email

This letter demonstrates just how keenly people soak up any new *Grand Theft Auto*-related info. For mission details, flick to pg30 – it's looking great, despite some tiny natural flaws. The game will really begin when you explore and start unearthing secrets.

Each to their own

What determines how good a game is? Is it the graphics? Or the gameplay and the story? Well if you make a game which succeeds highly under the above, you might still produce a load of crap. My point? It's what the person wants to see in the game that determines how good it is.

Why do people by racing games? To drive. Why do people buy FPSs? To shoot. Why is *Grand Theft Auto* one of the best games in the world? Because you can do anything in it.

Sometime last year I purchased *Resident Evil Outbreak* hoping it would be full of action, and similar to *Resi 4*. Two hours later I took it back to the shop in disappointment.

But just a week or two ago, I felt like getting a survival horror, not an action game. So I decided to get *Outbreak* again, and give it another shot. So I put it in my machine. Days later, I've

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"People tell me I look like Bill Gates."

Posted by: Rorschach

"When I'm having a nightmare, I press pause, scroll to exit and hit 'yes'."

Posted by: Slayer

'Best' of the Rest

Elsewhere, Madrandall says "I know who The Insider is." He doesn't, of course. Even we don't, he lurks in the shadows like an alleycat. Meanwhile, MGS2010 says "Does anyone else think Kane and Lynch look really camp?" You won't say that when they bite your nose off, mate.

Blog We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.

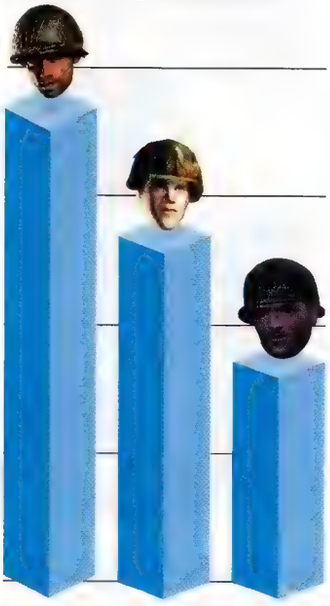
Much to prove We're looking forward to *Proving Ground*, as are many skate fans. Can it revive *Tony Hawk*'s fortunes?

Your Space

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best *MGS*, *MGS1*, *MGS2* Or *MGS3: Snake Eater*



Next Month Best *GTA*-alike: True *Crime*, *Canis* or *Scarface*.

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

finished it and I loved every second of it as well.

But why the sudden change of opinion? Because the first time I purchased it, I was hoping it would be something it wasn't. I wanted to go in, take out my weapon, and decapitate as many dead things as I could. Second time round, I wanted to focus on one thing – survival – and that's what the game delivered. A chance to survive.

My point. Unless its *GTA*, don't buy a game just because it got a high score, or because all your mates are raving about it. Get it when you want it for what it is. Lets repeat that. Get it. When you want it. For what it is.

Slayer Brown, Cape Town

Is that your *real* name? Anyway, Slayer makes a good point. Don't moan if you buy, say, *Shadow Of The Colossus* and it isn't action-packed throughout. Don't complain if *Oblivion* is too long to finish. And don't play *Manhunt 2* and expect it to be all blue skies and happiness... oh, er, right...

Think of the children

The *Manhunt 2* ban. Why the hell can't people seem to realise the fact that it's NOT MEANT FOR KIDS? It's NO different to releasing a gory film. Why can't we decide for ourselves?

The simple fact is that, after making such a big deal out of this, more people are now going to want to play this game, even though they probably didn't know about it prior to all the coverage. Let's face it, *Manhunt 2* was NOT hyped up, there were no demos or fancy trailers premiered at large gaming events... Rockstar were simply trying to release a game, and let people make there minds up afterwards. But now people will play to see what the fuss is about.

Scott Tailford, email

Sensitive issue this. Of the handful of people we know who've played it, they're split about 50/50 for, and against, the ban. Meantime, see what you're missing out in by reading our review of *Manhunt 2* this month. Gore aside, it's a pretty solid game.

What is it good for?

I totally agree with The Optimist (PSM89). World War 2 games are very thin on the ground. I can only count 11! I don't ever see a review begin with "Oh, another driving game," or "Oh, another football game".

Thing is, I'm a 42 year old gamer and was raised on the original Action Man and toy soldiers. Blasting Nazis is far more rewarding than some non-descript terrorist or alien. However, I would agree with you that they need to change. They need more realism.

Banhunt Would releasing *Manhunt 2* really have led to scenes like these?

Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

You are my last resort! I am due to fly to Hong Kong for business. My plan is to 'buy' a PS3 and bring it back to the UK. (It's a present for my nephew.)

I have questions which I will be eternally grateful if you can help me with (and will recommend my nephew continues to buy your magazine as I have).

Firstly, will UK games work on a HK machine? After three calls to Sony in the UK I have two 'YES' replies and one 'NO'.

The second question relates to the issue of NTSC v PAL. Will this affect me in England?

Jason Larke, Southend

"Nurse! NUUURSE! Me colostomy bag needs emptyin'! Anyway, Jason, you seem like a reet nice lad. Games are region-free and they'll work whatever machine you care t'mention. Eeh, I can't believe Sony telt yer different. It's all gone down'ill since I left there, I tell thee. And while yer NTSC PS3 won't work on an *old* PAL telly, any set made since, ooh, 1999 odd should be fine. Check the manual. Otherwise, yer'll need a Video System Convertor. Get one off somewhere like consolesandgadgets.co.uk. By gum.

Hard target Some external hard drives just aren't supported by PS3.

Dear Ken

I have an external hard drive, but no matter what I do my PS3 won't show it on the cross-media bar. Do you know what's wrong with it? Pressing ⓐ to select it does not work. Can you help me, please?

Patrick Lawlor, email

"Bah, would you look at the mess. Me micturate has gone all over t'shop. Anyway, yer young shaver, so yer hard drive ain't workin' for yer, eh? I got bad news for yer, then – there are quite a lot of 'ard drives that ain't supported by Sony and it sounds like you've got one of 'em. Mebbes a future firmware update will make everythin' all right. Mebbes not. Why not seek help on the tech forum of www.psm3mag.com? Still, at least I've got me 'ealth. Nurse, will yer please come and clean me bleedin' widdle up?!

Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Robo'.

"He'd put duct tape over his PS3's air vents"

Luke Diton London

In most war games, you start a level and after the cut-scene you just know that the Germans will arrive in seconds. That tension, where you're wandering through unknown countryside, all quiet and wondering when the attack is coming, is gone.

Many aspects of warfare are abandoned for mission structures. I don't feel there is anything more exciting than defending a position akin the Alamo. Defending a wall here, plugging a gap there, trying to avoid being over-run by swarms of enemies...

There are so many eras of war that are overlooked too. Napoleonic warfare, say. Name one game that truly simulates the rush of a charge? Imagine being in a line of redcoats and firing muskets at the advancing French, following with a bayonet jab.

I just feel that there is a rich vein of source material from WW2 and other conflicts that's untouched by developers. Please bring more games for us 'mature' gamers.

Dave Slaney, Nottingham

You may have missed The Optimist's ironic intent there, but make some valuable points. If we must have more war games, let's have some imagination injected into them, not merely more of the same. *Please.*

French kiss **Would a switch to Napoleonic times be a refreshing change for the war genre?**

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a place for friends
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PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world

Ben

ABOUT HIM

"I am fat and happy, yet sometimes depressed. But I'm not ugly like a dead sheep."

TELEVISION

"Family Guy is very funny indeed, because it has an alcoholic dog and an evil baby as well. Excellent."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Onimusha 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Because we love Family Guy as well. We're not sure why Ben thinks dead sheep are the epitome of ugliness, mind you.

Stevie G

ABOUT HIM

"Erm... I'm 19 year old. In September this year I'm going to college to study Media: Moving Images, which basically is editing, making movies."

WHO I'D LIKE TO MEET

"Deryk from Sum41 coz he's such a dude, Billie Joe from Green Day also – for the same reason – and a really rich woman who thinks I'm the best looking guy in the world... that'd be good!"

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Resistance, Calling All Cars

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

There's a chance he might be the new Spielberg or Tarantino, and we've always fancied a career in the movies.

Bakahead

ABOUT HIM

"I'd like to say I have a mixed view on religion, a small piece of them all – but if pushed I would have to put down 'Jedi'."

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

"I aspire to be either a Japanese translator or a games designer. Shame I can't get a job to afford courses for either. (They're out to get me, I know it!) I have to farm gold on World Of Warcraft every day else I'll get taken out back and shot. I'd write a life story, but I seriously can't be arsed."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Final Fantasy XII, God Of War 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Because he's a ninja. You are a *real* ninja, right? *Right?*

Ash

ABOUT HIM

"I'm not a boy racer."

INTERESTS

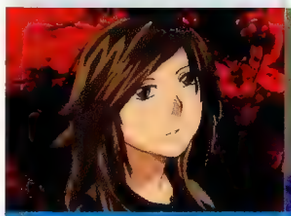
"I sometimes think about kitting up my mum's Nissan Micra because it's so damn plain! But who the hell puts neons, hydraulics and spoilers on a bloody Micra!? Gotta love that car."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Need For Speed Carbon

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We're hoping to buy a van to take us all to the Leipzig Games Show in August. Perhaps Ash could 'pimp' it up for us.



Karen

ABOUT HER

"I'm doing a videogame design course at St Helens college."

MUSIC

"I'm into all kinds of rock music from indie to emo to metal. The bands I like are Muse, Evanescence, Breed77, Killswitch Engage, Kasabian, Bullet for my Valentine, My Chemical Romance, Linkin Park, The Killers, Korn, Nirvana."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

God Of War 2, Okami

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

We hope she might be a new emo pal for Andy.

Chris

ABOUT HIM

"I love to surf and hang around with old smelly women in pubs."

INTERESTS

"Comic books, super heroes and stuff. I enjoy music very much, playing guitar and singing in my band Scarlet Lights. We suck, lol. I do like a nice meal every half hour or so. I'm probably the only boy who likes McFly."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Spider-Man 3, Resident Evil 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

To make up the fact he'll probably be fired from Scarlet Lights when they read this. Oh, and Nathan likes McFly as well.

Squirrel

ABOUT HER

"I have a really weird obsession with squirrels (don't ask)."

INTERESTS

I love playing videogames (I'd love to be computer games designer in the future but I'm not really smart enough with all the maths). My dream job would be to work in GAME, sadly I'm stuck working in Superdrug as a supervisor instead.

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Tomb Raider Anniversary

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

To encourage her game-designing dreams. Come on, Squizza, you can do. Boots is *loads* better than Superdrug, by the way.

The Man

ABOUT HIM

"I have many nicknames, Jack The Lad, The Man, the Don and, erm... Teddy Bear."

INTERESTS

"My stunning girlfriend. Oh, and I'm a major videogame-playing fanatic and GAMEFEST 2006 CHAMPION!"

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Oblivion, Virtua Fighter 5

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

As a further reward for being a game-playing champion. Also as he's clearly made up those nicknames. Do people really call you 'the Don'? *Really?*

Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome you aboard shortly!

You What?

How could anyone relate to Sonic? Well unless you're either three foot tall, blue or running around naked.

David Nicol, email

You don't want to come round here on Milf's 'Naked Blue Thursdays', then.

Do you ever suffer from BO? How do you treat it?

Mr No-Where, email

We mask the smell by rubbing our pits with a nice ripe Stilton. Andy, do you like bagels?

The bagel maestro,

Bagel Town

Andy says a mere bagel could never relieve him of his misery.

"PS3 is too expensive!"

I'm sick of hearing this. It wouldn't be too expensive if you could afford one. Peasant.

HOP5, email

There speaks a rich, slightly rude, man.

Alabama, MySpace.

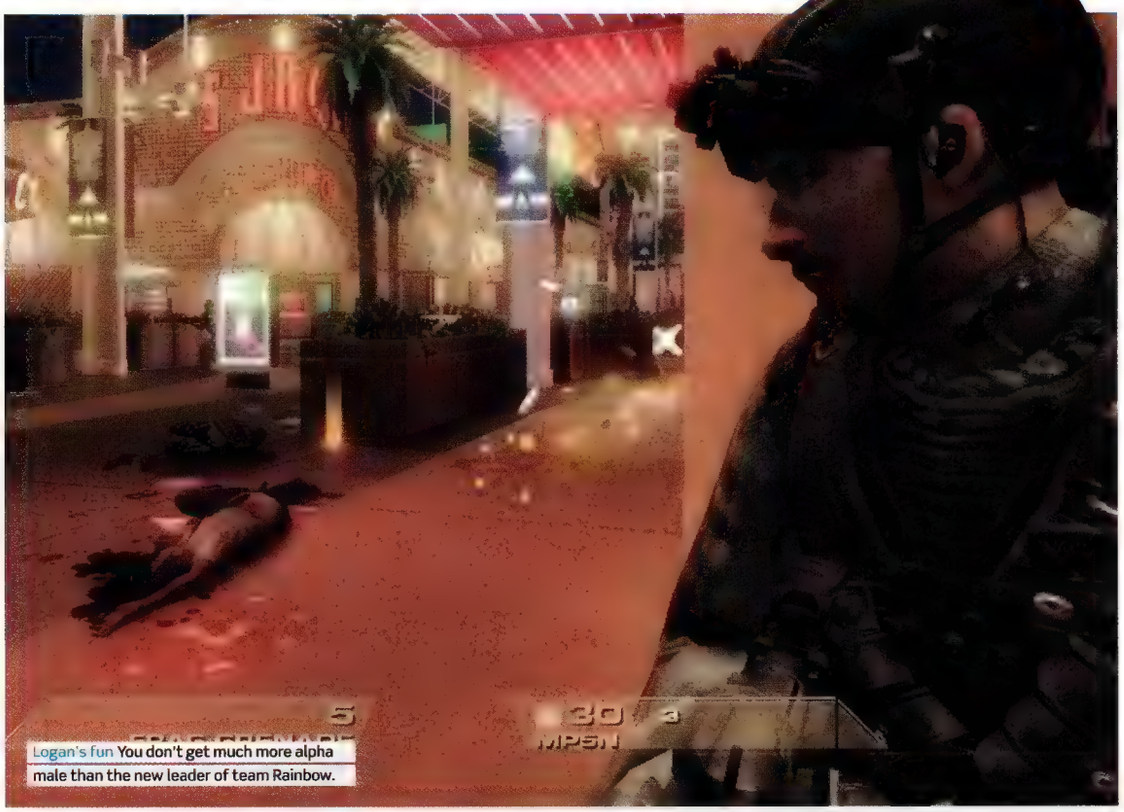
Don't talk about *White Knight Story*. It reminds me of work... damn tumble driers.

Mad31n3ng, MySpace

So it doesn't remind you of, well, knights...?

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done



Logan's fun You don't get much more alpha male than the new leader of team Rainbow.

Rainbow Six Vegas

When Clancy's boys hit the strip, you can always bet on red

Reader Profile

Name Alex Hilton
Location Southend
Fave games *Primal, Final Fantasy VIII*
About me I love just having fun and spending time with my mates. I want to be a games journalist as I love playing games.

Rainbow Six Vegas brings tactical shooters to a new high. You take the role of Logan Keller, who has recently taken leadership of the Rainbow Six team.

The game starts on the Mexican Border, with your team going in to stop a terrorist ringleader named Irena Morales. But from the off things go bad – you are cut off from your team and have to battle your way through the Mexican streets to re-group.

This section of the game is completely bland and dull, feeling like something from *Splinter Cell* – with each area either brown or bathed in darkness. That said, it does make a nice training level for any newcomers to the series as it allows the player to try a lot of the moves and manoeuvres that are needed in the game.

After what seems like forever, Logan is flown to Vegas. This is a stark contrast from the Mexican border, with the neon lights and shining buildings of Sin City recreated in glorious detail. This is where the real story starts; five areas with three or four sections in each, stretching across The Strip.

The gameplay is a wonderful experience. With the gunplay handled excellently it really feels like you're in the thick of it. The guys at Ubi have nicked the health system from *Call Of Duty* and *Gears Of War*, but it adds realism. The best thing in the game is the AI, the way that the enemy really wants to kill you in any way possible. Unfortunately your team aren't so clever – having them stand there being shot and not return fire is annoying.

Vegas is a true thinker's shooter. If you like to consider the best ways to kill your enemies, instead of just using run and gun tactics, this is your game. **Alec Hilton**

Reader Verdict

A cut above the usual shoot-'em-all action, and surprisingly brainy.

85

Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Oblivion

Exploring equals boring? You be the judge.

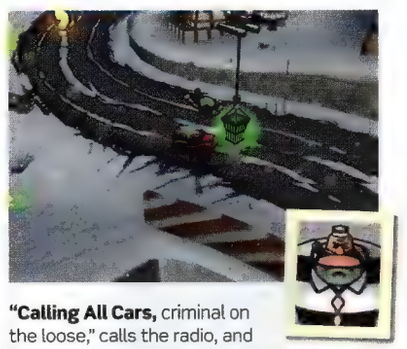
Maybe I'm being a bit hasty in saying this, but I'm going ahead anyway. *Oblivion* is possibly the most boring game i have ever played in my entire life. With gameplay consisting of 'exploring' the vast amount of landscape and fighting every creature you come across, it's more like playing *Yorkshire: The Game*.

For me, beginning a game with a 30-minute tutorial is not a good idea – especially when you are learning just the basics. The fact that this takes place underground in the dark doesn't help much, either. Finally the moment comes and you venture outside. Magnificent view, superb effects – it's looking promising. Next objective – walk towards the red arrow on your compass. How very brilliant... **Stephen Grace**

26

Calling All Cars

"We've got a hot potato!"



"Calling All Cars, criminal on the loose," calls the radio, and it's time to go mental. The objective's simple: capture a criminal and return him to jail. Sounds easy? Yeah, but only if you reckon without the three other cars waiting to ram, hammer, or magnetise the crim out of the back of your vehicle. Adding to the fun, there are several different ways to send your passenger to chokey: the front door's the easiest, but if you're feeling cheeky you can head up a ramp or jump into the rooftop holding pen for bonus points. True masters will want to try catching the paddy wagon or the police chopper, but that ups the risk of losing the crim. With lovely graphics and a hilarious Oirish cop on commentary, the only problem with *CCC* is that, at only four levels, it's hardly the longest game in the world. **Ed Bellamy**

82

"Imagine being in the redcoats, firing muskets at the French"
Dave Slaney Nottingham

Blast Factor

Infectious? It's like some sort of virus...

The first thing that hits you when you start *Blast Factor* is how easy it is to pick up and play, unlike some others in the PlayStation store: *Gripshift*, I'm looking at you. The Sixaxis controls, implemented perfectly, keep you twisting and thrusting the pad like it was a match made in gaming heaven. Top marks to Sony for that. As for the gameplay, everything stays fluid and you get one of those 'get in there' moments when you complete a section and unlock Hard mode.

But the saving system is awful – you can only save when you have completed a lengthy cell, like an adventure game with few save points. Still, the graphics are lovely and it the co-op doesn't feel tagged on, like in certain games. Well worth the £3.49, or whatever they're charging now. **Tyler Roberts**

85

PSM3
You were so right!
Reader love

"No health packs in the boss fights? What were they thinking"
Big Paulie, email

Spider-Man 3

We said "A license that's full of upsetting gameplay blunders."
PSM89 | Joel Snape | 72%

"Miles better than *Spider-Man 2*, and I'm glad I don't have to fetch balloons any more"
ElricX, email

PSM3
You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone

Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

Dance, Voldo, dance by SpyderMaxi

LIMBER There are a few videos making the most of the *Soul Calibur* gimp-monster's acrobatic ability, but this one's the best choreographed. As long as you can stand the Black Eyed Peas. http://tinyurl.com/2ghtbf

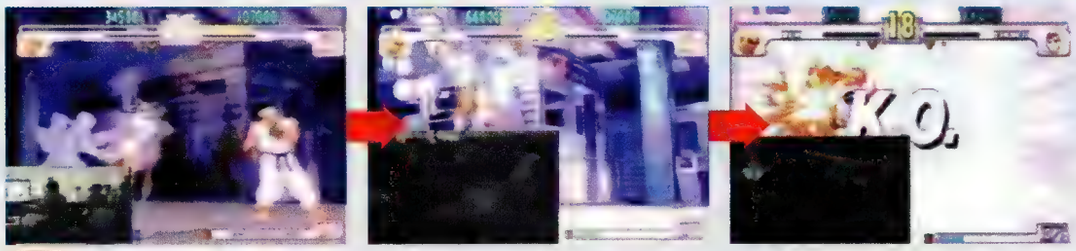
Ultimate Utopia XXIII by adarahs

TASTY What RPGs would be like if they happened in the real world – i.e. you'd troop into strangers' houses with a group of friends and they'd be forced to stand there as you steal their stuff. http://tinyurl.com/kqovv

Resident Evil 2 mit Lego by Mapkyce

SCARY The introductory zombie attack from *Resident Evil 2*, flawlessly recreated with tiny yellow men. The dialogue's in German, but you don't need to sprechen sie Deutsche to chortle. http://tinyurl.com/2749v5

Street Fighter pwnage by NightmareZero



PAIN The best *Street Fighter* performance ever captured on film. Top-rank player Daigo averts certain death by parrying all 17 hits of Chun Li's super attack before striking back. Awesome. http://tinyurl.com/zlm88

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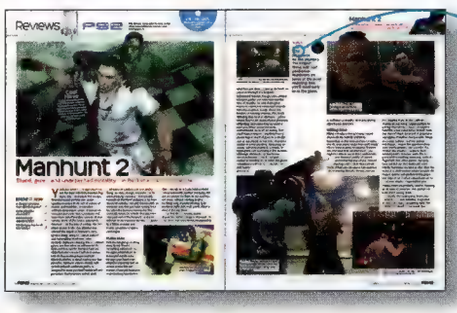

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Pub Vivendi | **Dev** Radical
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Violent shapeshifting chaos

ON THE DISC
Prototype will be on the disc next time

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO

Prototype is *GTA*'s first contender for the next-gen free-roaming crown...

New York City. A hooded figure stands motionless in the centre of Times Square. It's morning and there are people everywhere. And we're not talking about the usual video game approximation of a crowd. It's a kinetic cluster of bodies merging and stirring through sun-bleached streets. The camera swings upwards revealing vast, intricately-rendered skyscrapers reaching towards a cloudless blue sky, turning white as the harsh sunlight hits their sides. This is not the compromised parody of NYC we've seen a hundred times before in games like *Spider-Man* or *True Crime* – this *is* New York, as realistically, cinematically and lovingly rendered as it's ever likely to be. Car horns blare, sirens howl, people shout to one another and you genuinely feel like you're standing in a real city. You can almost smell the asphalt and the hot dog vendors.

And then fantasy takes over. The hooded figure springs to life, pushing violently through pedestrians, sliding across the tops of cars and sprinting up the sides of buildings. And then we see it – a gargantuan insect-like egg jutting out of the centre of the road, pulsating and oozing. People begin to panic and the crowds scatter like buckshot. And then the attack choppers come buzzing in, followed by trundling squads of squeaking tanks and platoons of soldiers. Something's about to go down in Times Square.

Mercer me

But before we tell you what happens next, let's explain the premise of *Prototype*. You are Alex Mercer, a mysterious science experiment gone wrong. Thanks to the genetic meddling of a shady organisation you are, to all intents and purposes, a shapeshifter. You look like a hoodie-clad twentysomething human but that's a clever disguise to help you blend into your environment. See, you don't really *have* a shape because you can be anyone you want by absorbing their DNA. Which, unfortunately, involves killing them.

OF COME

But back to Times Square. For reasons the developers are yet to reveal, your objective here is to destroy the alien egg. And this is where you first discover Mercer's powers. Using his shapeshifting ability, Alex can morph his body T1000-style. So to protect himself from projectiles the egg's hurling at him, an organic armadillo-like shell envelopes him. It's natural body armour. Then he mutates his arm into a strange blade-like appendage – think *Resi*'s Tyrant – and swings it at the egg. But, because this is a game and as such is designed to make your life hard, the army are after you. Complicated? Well, let's leave Times Square again.

Prototype's about a conspiracy. A big one that you have to solve. You do so by finding clues. The entire expanse of New York can be freely explored, and hidden in its darkest, hardest to reach corners are pieces of the 'web of intrigue'. These can be phone taps, documents, people... you know, Watergate-type stuff. And by piecing it all together – quite how this is done, Radical won't say – you solve the mystery of your origins and are led directly to

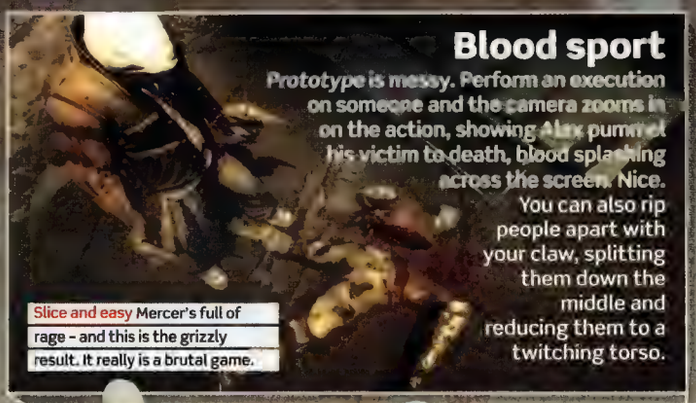
whoever made you a shapeshifting mutant.

Time to explore more of Alex's abilities. A group of soldiers rush at you, firing their guns and generally being aggressive. You calmly drop to your knees and plunge your hand into the pavement beneath you. Suddenly from directly under the marines dozens of spikes thrust upwards and skewer them, killing an entire troop instantly. So not only can Alex form deadly shapes, but he can stretch like Mr Fantastic and tunnel through the ground beneath him. But that was nothing – he has tanks and choppers after him now. Luckily you can 'borrow' enemy vehicles.

Just like in Mercenaries and Just Cause, Alex can commandeer vehicles by latching on to them, but he also has to complete Resi 4-style rhythm action sequences. Keep following the prompts and he'll run up a tank's barrel, prise open the hatch, jump inside, slice the driver to bits and take the helm. Same for a copter, only he crawls under the side, yanks out both pilots with his mutated arm and enters the cockpit. So no longer do you have to try and destroy the egg with melee attacks; you can batter it with a payload of hellfire missiles or some well-aimed tank shells. In one scene, you run up the side of a skyscraper, flip backwards and steal a chopper all in one move. It's mental.

Body moving

You can also steal people. Remember earlier we mentioned shouting DNA? Well, here's how it works. Murder someone – an innocent bystander or an enemy – and



Blood sport

Prototype is messy. Perform an execution on someone and the camera zooms in on the action, showing Alex pummel his victim to death, blood splashing across the screen. Nice. You can also rip people apart with your claw, splitting them down the middle and reducing them to a twitching torso.

Slice and easy Mercer's full of rage – and this is the grizzly result. It really is a brutal game.

Spike out Watching your victims wriggling as they draw their last breaths is a disturbing thrill.

An arm and a leg

Here's the 'ground spike' ability we mentioned earlier in action. It's impressive, but we're told by the developers that's actually one of Alex's earliest powers. You grow as a character steadily throughout the game, unlocking new shapeshifting forms and organic weapons. To keep things balanced, however, powers only become available at certain points in the game, so you don't become too strong early on and breeze through the action. We kind of dread to think what macabre forms you'll take in later levels, but we also can't wait to find out.

Prototype

"It steals elements from almost every game but puts them together in a unique way"

Hunt or be hunted

These ape-like beasts are known as Hunters. They were born from the same experiment that created you, and are hunting you down, hence the name. They're just as agile as Alex, bouncing around menacingly on all fours, leaving you no choice but to fight the marauding menaces off. Watching them tear through the city streets sending bystanders flying into the air is actually quite terrifying, and they never give up the chase. Yikes.

Beast wars These swines will hunt you down in packs, so make sure you don't get cornered...

"One of the most exciting, original games we've seen in ages"

you'll see their body turn liquid-like and slide up your leg. This means you now have their data stored and can basically transform into them at any time. This can be used tactically, for instance taking over the body of an army commander and ordering his troops to help you in battle. You can also use it to sneak into enemy bases, blend in with crowds and dozens of other uses, depending on your objectives.

Prototype will be largely free-roaming. Missions can be selected as and when you like, and there are side-quests to distract you from the main story mode, which only actually makes up a limited portion of the game. Radical's last two games are some of the best 'open world' titles around – *Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* and *Scarface* – and their expertise in creating believable, populated sandboxes makes their new game's playspace vast, detailed and crammed with things to do.

There's nothing else like *Prototype* on PS3. It steals elements from almost every game imaginable, but they way it puts them together makes it unique. It has the acrobatics of *Prince Of Persia*, the immense world of *GTA*, the destruction of *Hulk* and the disguise system of *Destroy All Humans*. It's as amorphous as its lead character and one of the most exciting, original games we've seen in ages.

PSM3 Reckons

A truly monstrous lead character, a gargantuan city to explore and a story that promises to twist and turn more than an episode of Lost make Prototype a deliciously original and unique prospect. It's *GTA* with a gory sci-fi twist and we think we'll love it.

Block by block

Prototype's ever-changing cityscape...

In *Prototype*, NYC is split into blocks, all of which have a different 'status'. This can change as you progress through the game. Think the gang-controlled zones in San Andreas. You can tell what zone you're in by the filter used on the in-game camera. Different colour tones reflect the mood, which is a rather more natural way of figuring out what lies ahead than a clumsy HUD or map screen.

Chopper suey You can grab this attack helicopter from the air and fly about in it.

Neutral zone

Firstly we have neutral zones. Here everything is calm and people go about their business, shopping and working. It's best to remain disguised and search for clues to unravel the web of intrigue. The colours here are cold and muted, making everything look hyper-realistic and familiar, like the NYC you've seen in films.

Killing spree Alex is basically unstoppable, but if he gets pinned down by too many soldiers there's a chance he'll get his ass handed to him by the amassed forces.

War zone

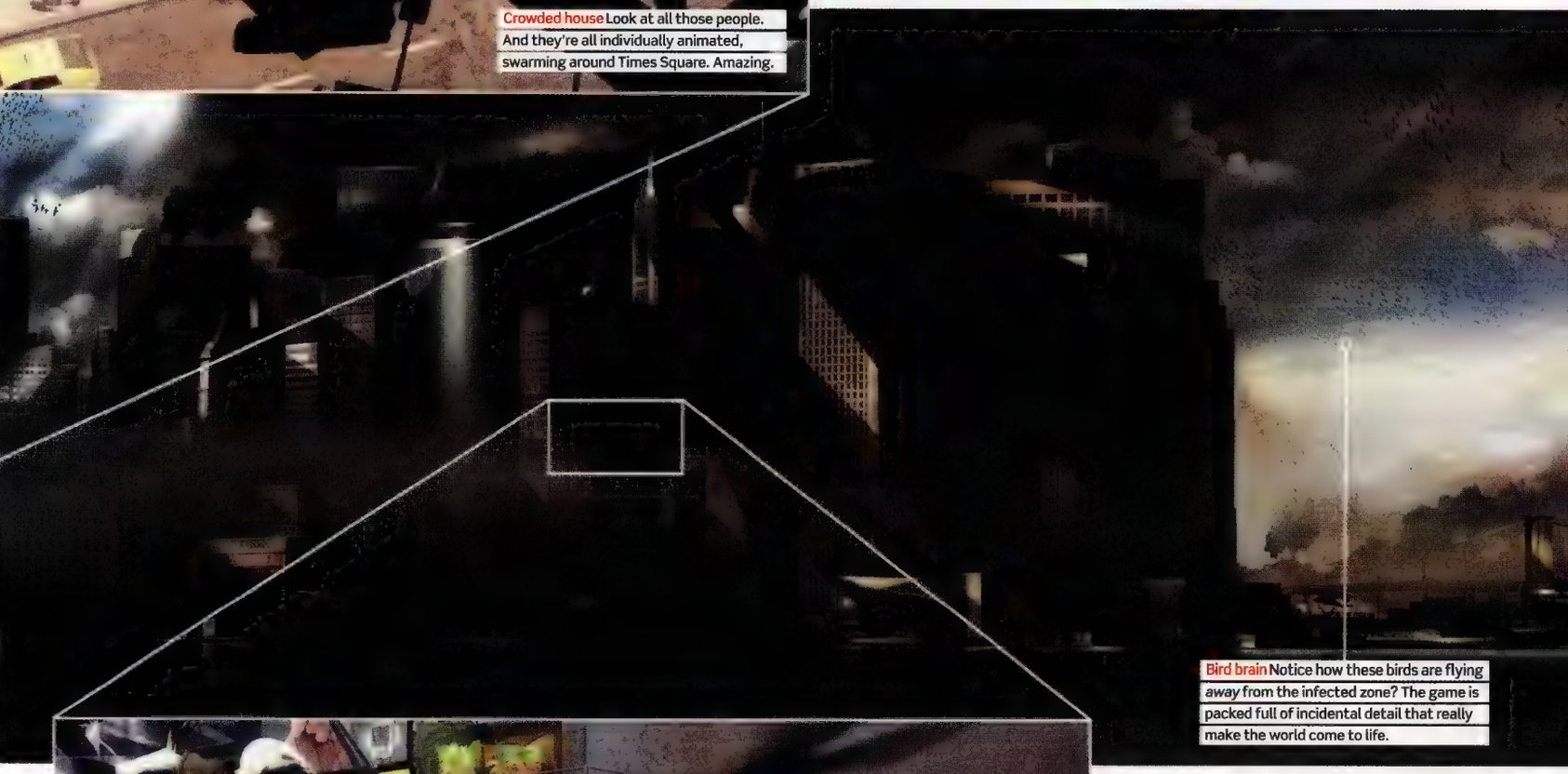
Flames lick the sky in war zones, turning everything an imposing orange. Choppers fly through the air, tanks roam the streets and soldiers engage in furious firefights with the Hunters. As you'd expect, being here is incredibly dangerous, especially if the army spot you and send their entire force after you.

Prototype

"Twists and turns more than an episode of Lost. A deliciously original prospect"

Crowded house Look at all those people. And they're all individually animated, swarming around Times Square. Amazing.

Eggs over easy That thing in the background's the giant alien egg we were talking about...



Bird brain Notice how these birds are flying *away* from the infected zone? The game is packed full of incidental detail that really make the world come to life.

Quarantine zone The mysterious disease that's spreading through NYC has yet to be explained by the developers, but we assume it's bad. Diseases usually are.

Infected zone

There's a virus spreading through the city – the same thing that mutated both you and the Hunters. Areas of the city have been completely devastated by it, and the government's had no choice but to set up a quarantine, fencing in affected bystanders. The sky here's an eerie red colour and signs of decay are everywhere. Hunters roam freely around the streets, so they're just as dangerous as the war zone areas.

HOW **BUNGIE** IS FINISHING THE FIGHT: THE INSIDE STORY OF **HALO 3**

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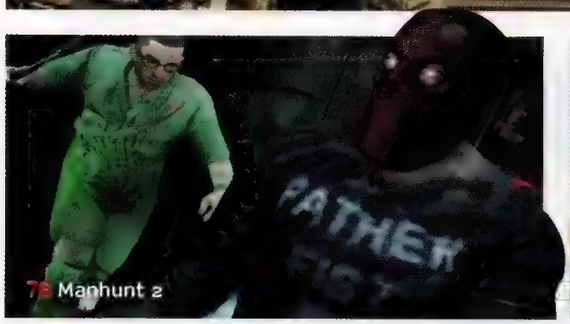

Start

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The Shield	80
Marvel Trading Card Game	80
Hot Brain	80
Lucinda Green's...	80
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	81
King Of Fighters Max Impact 2	81

"*Gradius* needed space-faring penguins"

Parodius Portable page 80

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29 **Rubbish**
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49 **Poor**
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69 **All right**
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84 **Good**
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89 **Superb**
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

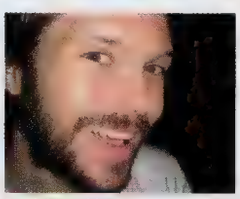
90+ **Amazing**
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

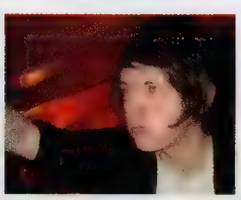
The Team

If you see us on the street, say hello – we *crave* recognition



Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, the madness of E3.
Playing Everything at E3: "Too many games... can't cope..."

Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, glueing footballs to his feet.
Playing *Killzone*: "I prefer Boyzone, to be honest."



Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, painting his bedroom black.
Playing *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*: "He wears black. Emo ninjas – yeah!"

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, some obscure yellow-themed cartoon.
Playing *God Hand*: "Ludicrous and stupid. Not me, the *game*..."

Nathan Ditum
Specialist in First-person shooters, flooding.
Playing *Ghost Recon*: "There are no actual ghosts in this. Liars."

Louis Pattison
Specialist in Playing controversially banned games.
Playing *Manhunt 2*: "Oh, god. Oh, the gore... can I have another go?"

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Ubisoft
Price £50 | **Release** August 24
Multi-player 1-16 (online)

ON THE DISC
More war action with Call Of Duty 4

"The flat-out endorsement of war is laid on a bit thick"

Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

Advanced warfighting on the most advanced console works like a charm

KNOW IT NOW

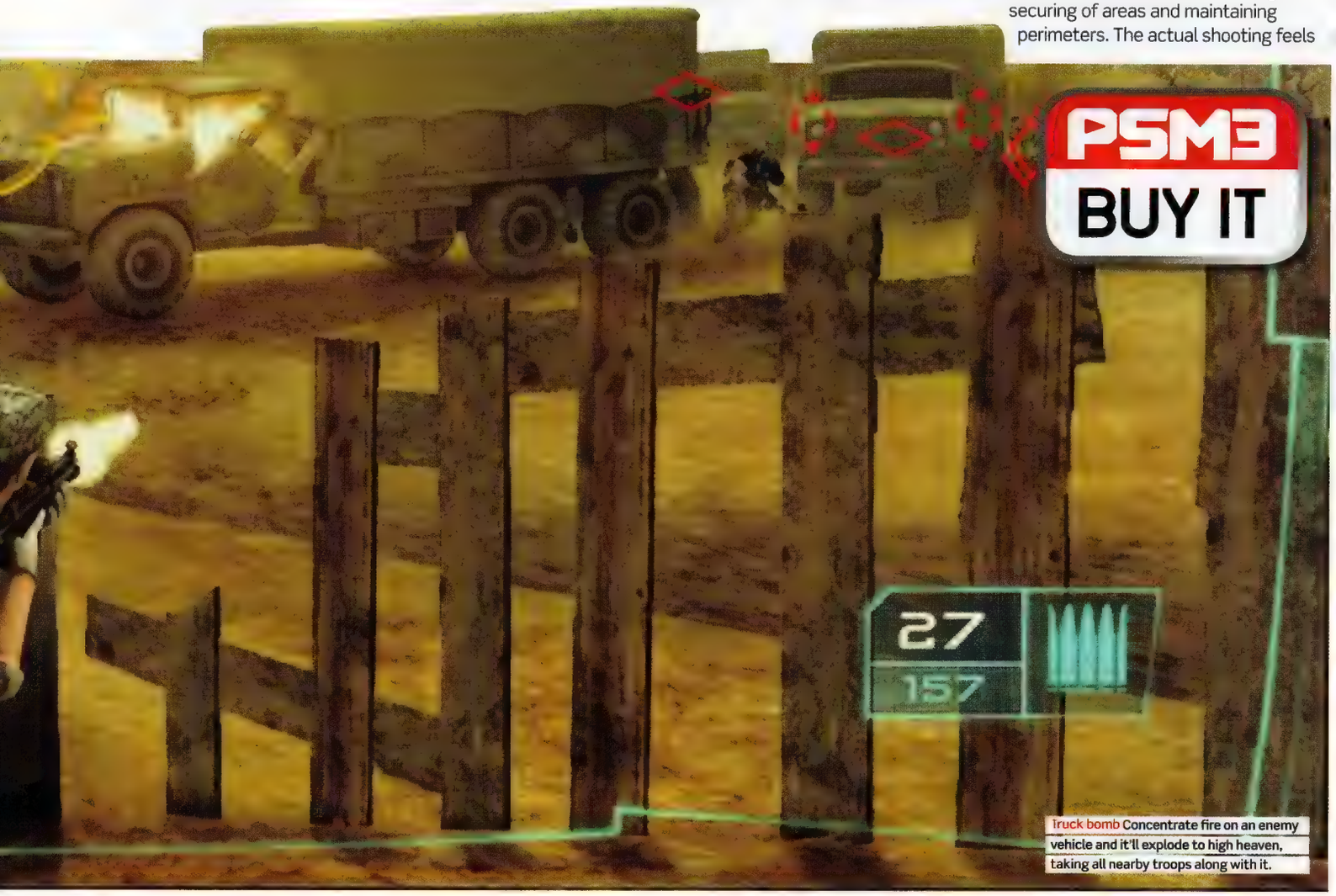
- Squad-based tactical shooting? ☑
- A world of future war-tech? ☑
- Terrorists planning a WMD assault? ☑
- An introduction by Michael Moore? ☒

After last year's disappointing and watered-down PS2 port of the first *GRAW* title, this is PlayStation's first proper look at Ubisoft's reinvigorated tactical shooter. An extension of the original *Ghost Recon* series, *Advanced Warfighter* is set a little further into the future – we're now shooting the happy residents of 2014 – and is more heavily focused on the sophisticated battle gear of tomorrow than the early titles. It's also a massive graphical leap over its predecessors, showcasing incredibly human character models and 'so life-like we must actually be watching Sky News'-style battlegrounds.

First up, though, a little warning. Plot-wise the game's pretty much Blu-ray-pressed US propaganda, with a massive thing for the American military. The basics are that you and your top-secret Ghost team are sent charging into Mexico to slap down a rebel uprising and restore democracy. While we're used to jingoistic wargames, *GRAW*'s flat out endorsement of shooting stuff – cut-scenes criticising anti-war media coverage, obligatory use of WMDs as a plot device – really lays it on thick. Those of you with an ounce of intelligence will feel a little insulted, while regular Guardian readers may need to have a lie-down between levels.

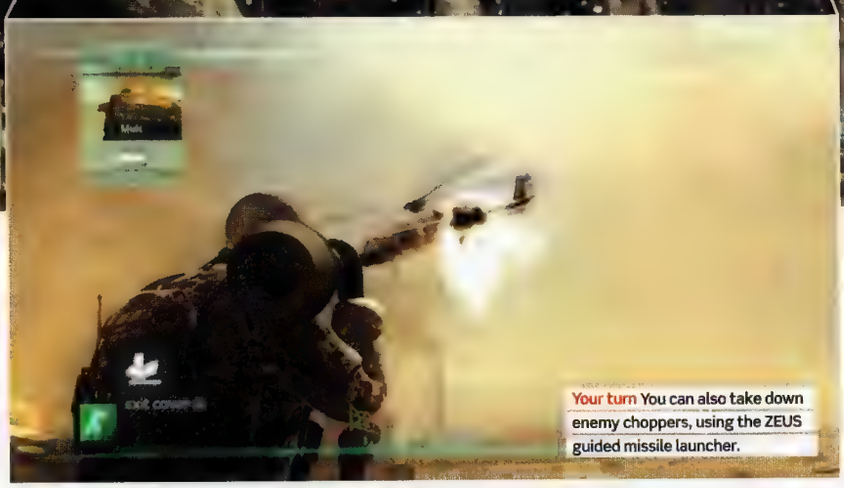
What do you Recon?

The best thing to do is ignore as much of the gung-ho stuff as possible, because underneath lies a complex, accomplished and brilliantly playable war sim. Sticking firmly in the *Ghost Recon* tradition, *Advanced Warfighter 2* strives for realism more than sensationalism. There's lots of checkpoints and rendezvous-making, securing of areas and maintaining perimeters. The actual shooting feels



Truck bomb Concentrate fire on an enemy vehicle and it'll explode to high heaven, taking all nearby troops along with it.

Black Hawk Down This scorching set-piece sees your transport taken out, leaving you and your team desperately holding your ground while waiting for an evacuation.



Your turn You can also take down enemy choppers, using the ZEUS guided missile launcher.

a lot like we imagine real war might, in that it only takes a very small number of bullets to kill someone, and if you don't hide nearly all the time you get shot very quickly. Unlike most war games, the emphasis is very much on thinking and planning your way through levels, rather than charging in, absorbing enemy fire and slotting everything in sight.

Crouching soldier Finding and moving between cover is crucial if you want to avoid being riddled with bullets.

Controls play a massive part in the game's success. *Advanced Warfighter* is all about how you interact with and utilise all your wish-fulfilment war toys, and a balanced, manageable interface is crucial. As such control of your character – the hard-bitten Captain Scott Mitchell – is kept smart and simple. The sticks manage moving and aiming, with Mitchell automatically assuming a cover position when you press him up against any object or surface. The fiddle-free system is a blessing, as this is where you'll spend much of your time – leaning out or over walls and obstacles to fire, tapping R3 for close targeting and L1 to hold your breath and steady your aim. Selecting from your four available weapons – long and short range, two types of grenade – is similarly easy, with each option mapped onto the D-pad and accessed by △.

Squad psychology

Adding more complexity are the additional controls for issuing instructions to your three-man Ghost team. Before each

Juárez Dennis The Mexican city of Juárez is left devastated by the violence of the war.

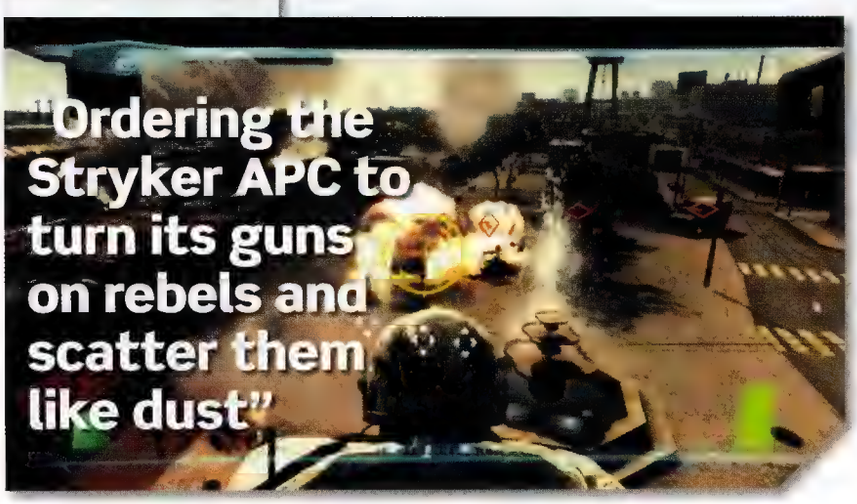
Medic! Your squad doc has a limited number of medipacks, make sure you use them wisely

mission you're given a very short briefing about what you'll encounter – type of terrain, strength of opposition – and you can then balance your squad accordingly by selecting soldiers with medical knowledge or specialist weapons expertise. Once deployed, your boys rely on you for commands entirely, and they won't even move without your say so.

Again, the controls are as streamlined as possible, basically limited to 'go there' and 'come back.' Tapping ↓ on the D-pad gives the order to regroup on your position, while ↑ sends them to whichever spot you're targeting – where they very sensibly arrange themselves in cover – or instructs them to attack if you've an enemy unit in your sights. The only variation is the squad's 'general aggression' setting, which can be toggled between recon and free-firing.

Aiding your operational organisation is the ability to see from your squad's perspective using your networked com units. In an improvement over the original *Advanced Warfighter*, holding L2 now gives the entire screen over to their head-cam, from which you can glean tactical info and also identify positions to

Fave Feature



Gung-ho gunship

Some missions have you manning a powerful mounted machine gun in a Black Hawk helicopter. It's tough to aim, but the destruction is immense.

Tech how-to

Precision attack

Using the cross-cam to coordinate your squad

Cover cart Explore using the remotely driven ammo mule, which doubles as handy portable cover.

advance towards and targets to attack. Ultimately, this is the key to the game's success – switching between cams and co-ordinating an assault is really, really good fun, especially when you're given additional support units.

Home a-drone

First up these are simple, coming in the form of an airborne drone which you can use to scan the battlezone, identifying enemy units and plotting a route to your objectives, and an ammunition mule which carries extra equipment, and which you can also use like a remote control piece of cover. Later on you'll also be given use of a Stryker APC – one of the game's standout missions sees you marching behind the tank-like armour unit as it rumbles down a war-torn road, ordering it to fire on lurking insurgents – and a 'Little Bird' Gunship.

Best of all, though, is the mission for

Net profit Up to 32 people can play online in *GRAW2*. Watch for more in a future issue.

Ghost Recon 2

"*GRAW2* is an almost flawlessly conceived and realised war simulator"

Gotcha Once targets are identified by the Cypher they light up as red diamonds on your HUD.

Eye in the sky The UAV cypher drone flies over the battlezone - switch to its view to scan the area for enemy units.

Healthy living The colour of your team's icon under the cross-com screen represents their health.

I can see you... Top Ghost weapon has to be the SR AS50 sniper, which can pierce thin walls and shoot enemies through cover, leaving them nowhere to hide. Nice.

Body shield The best thing about being in charge is that you can simply send your men in ahead. Good luck, boys.

which you're lent extra infantry from the Mexican army. See, one of our few criticisms of *Advanced Warfighter* is that your Ghost squad always operates as a three – you can't individually deploy your men, which keeps things moving quickly, certainly, but also cuts down your tactical options somewhat. The additional unit makes things much more interesting, giving you the ability to surround or lay traps for your enemies. Better yet, the mission level itself is brilliantly designed for the purpose, a ruined town filled with pale concrete shells which provides layers and layers of cover to move through, checking sight-lines and co-ordinating movements. It's tense, satisfying and really is excellently executed.

There are some minor flaws worth pointing out. It's not as easy to surprise your opposition as the tutorial would have you believe, for instance, and they have a knack of spotting you and your boys just as you're settling into position. Similarly, enemy soldiers have an uncanny ability to predict when you're going to run out of breath while steady-aiming, popping out of cover to fire off a few rounds while you're sucking air and your sights are wobbly. And the fact that you're always crouching as you leave low cover gets to be very frustrating – at first having to tap L3 to stand when running to a new safe spot is no problem, but when you come up against a level that requires plenty of moving from cover to cover it gets to be a big pain.

Ghost with the most

But these are very much side issues – overall, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2* is an almost flawlessly conceived and realised war simulator. It wraps you up in the cutting-edge (and still being researched) technology of conflict like nothing else around, giving you an unparalleled sense of control over your various units. An Xbox 360 port it may be, but it's the best tactical shooter we've played in ages. Top stuff. **Nathan Ditum**

PSM3 Verdict

***GRAW2* contains...**

Loads of war gadgets | Manageable squad controls | Ruined Mexican landscapes

Overall Combines strategy and shooting to excellent effect. Not perfect, but it really *feels* like war.

86

Pub Activision | **Dev** Traveller's Tales
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
See Transformers on the disc now
Side B

Transformers: The Game

Why didn't they transform it into something better?

KNOW IT NOW

- Loads of playable Transformers? ☑
- Autobot and Decepticon modes? ☑
- Big chaotic robot battles? ☑
- As good as the recent movie version? ☒

When we review a game we keep a notebook beside us, scribbling down anything that annoys us or that we think could have been done better. While playing *Transformers*, the game of the film of the comic of the toy, we found ourselves writing just as much as we were playing, pausing every other minute to furiously jot something down. Looking at the page now it's like something from a serial killer's secret diary – all demented handwriting and vivid swear words.

Robot bores

The first thing you notice is how choppy it looks. Even through HDMI on a brand new telly it's murkier than a muddy pond. A bit like an upscaled PS2 game. The Transformers themselves look nice enough, an organic mesh of shapeless metal parts, but the world around them's boxy and unconvincing. The actual process of transforming – mysteriously referred to as 'converting' in-game – is pretty sexy, however. Hit Ⓐ and your robot whirs and clicks into its relative vehicle, accompanied by a version of the 'wup-wup-wup' sound made famous by the cartoons.

But none of this matters because even if *Transformers* was rendered in detail so intricate it was indistinguishable from reality, it'd still be poor. For one, the cars don't handle properly. They don't even feel like cars – they feel more like snowmobiles, slipping and sliding all over the place. Helicopters and jets fare better, but it's hardly *Ace Combat*. Then there's the physics. They're completely rudimentary and everything seems to have the same weight. Throw the fuselage of a jet at a rival Transformer and it'll have the same impact as lobbing a street lamp. Drive into a car and it'll flip wildly into the air, as if all gravity was removed from the Earth. It's daft, and it makes the game look sillier than it is. And it's already very silly.

And the missions. God. They're all *exactly* the same. Fight, drive, destroy a building, fight, drive. The only difference is the story surrounding them, and that's largely unengaging. Some of the cut-scenes are literally five

Thrill of the chase Playing as Bumblebee, you have to stop Barricade before he tracks down Sam Witwicky – played by Shia LeBeouf in the Transformers movie.

Protect and swerve Dodge Barricade's flailing arms and give him a mighty robot kicking.

Bowled over You have to throw objects at Barricade to stun him, otherwise he'll knock you over.

Point to point The more you pummel your enemy with objects and fisticuffs, the more 'heroic' points you get, which means you're being a good Autobot.

Field of dreams The fight ends up in a US football field. You can tear up a goal and use it as a weapon.

Unlockables

The generation game

How to unlock your childhood memories

If you fancy stomping about as '80s versions of either Optimus Prime or Megatron (pictured below), you have to complete *Transformers*' myriad side quests. Then you can unlock retro paint jobs for Starscream and Jazz, and a Cybertron level that, despite the nostalgia value, is incredibly disappointing.

Sky high Looks exciting, doesn't it? Well it's not. It's clumsy as hell thanks to the dodgy camera. Boo.

Smash and grab You can pick almost every item in the level up, although causing this kind of damage as an Autobot is frowned upon. Leave the chaos to the Decepticons.

"There are so many obvious flaws..."

seconds long, and the in-game dialogue is muffled and unhelpful. In one mission you're playing as Barricade (the one that turns into a police car) and you have to defeat Bumblebee. You chase him down and fire missiles at him until he transforms, then have a regular fight with him. Then he transforms again and screams off, forcing you to repeat the process a further five times until he finally curls up and dies.

Fight club

We'd have forgiven this if the combat was good, but it disappoints. You find yourself performing the same three hit combo over and over again, and your missiles/lasers/guns don't seem to have any tangible impact on the enemy. It doesn't feel like two huge, clunking robots having a scrap as it should. It feels lightweight and unsatisfying. The big gimmick of being able to choose between Autobot and Decepticon campaigns is initially quite exciting, but because the missions are so

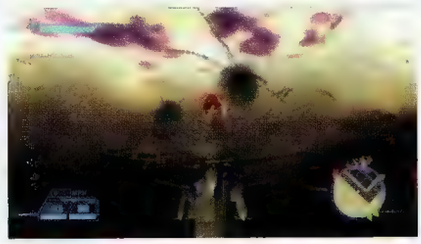
Such great heights

You can climb up the sides of buildings, which is handy if you're battling against a flying 'former like Starscream or Megatron.

Transformers

"As a game, this is average at best. As merchandise, it's passable"

Hide and seek Ironhide transforms into a GMC Topkick truck. His arm cannons are pretty destructive.



Come fly with me Blackout's the most fun of the 'formers to play as. He uses his rotor blades like a samurai sword.

Truck off Prime transforms into a long-nosed Peterbilt semi-truck. Use it to ram through obstacles.

indistinguishable from one another, the difference is sadly superficial. As Autobots you get penalised for smashing up cars and buildings, but rewarded for it as a Decepticon. Gameplay-wise, both stories are exactly the same.

The opening level of the Decepticon campaign, however, is actually the best part of the game, and an indication of what could have been had they spent more time on *Transformers*. It takes place in the desert at a secluded military base and sees you, playing as Blackout, destroying fighter jets, tanks and buildings. You get a real feeling of power as you trundle across the dunes punting tanks in the air and flipping to helicopter mode to take out aircraft. The game's damage system is actually quite satisfying, with almost everything shattering and exploding under your feet. But, as the game often does, it immediately removes any feeling of satisfaction by making you play as Scorponok, a rubbishy Transformer that doesn't even transform. Instead, it burrows underground, stinging things with its metal tail. In this mission you're given a strict time limit to destroy radar trucks, and it's massively unforgiving and irritating. Whenever you think *Transformers* is about to morph into a decent game, it turns around and slaps you in the face, rooted in repetitive design and compromise.

Robots in despair

As a game, this is average at best. And as a piece of merchandise to keep the nippers happy, it's merely passable. There are so many obvious flaws that the developers *must* have known, and either rushed to get it out in time for the film or just weren't able to implement greater changes due to the restrictions of the film and the toy licence. They should have used the template for the actually-quite-good *Transformers* game released by Atari a few years ago and improved upon it, rather than go their own direction and create *Generic Film Tie-In Third-Person Action Adventure #56*. Once again, a prime license is squandered on a so-so product that's only slightly less throwaway than a Transformers lunch box. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

***Transformers: The Game* contains...**
Giant robots fighting | Buildings being levelled | Weird physics | Boring missions

Overall A lazy film tie-in, barely redeemed by some fan-pleasing extras. Only satisfies in brief flashes.

52

PS2

Pub Eidos | **Dev** IO Interactive
Price £30 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
See IO's PS3 latest, Kane & Lynch, right now
PS3/Latest

Cool Move
Agent 47 offs his victims in dozens of different ways throughout the series. We favour the sleathier options . Here, for instance, 47 makes it look as if this gym bunny has accidentally crushed himself with his weights. Oops.

Dual-wielding death Since Hitman 2, the image of Agent 47 and his dual pistols has become iconic

Silent but deadly Use stealthy weapons to achieve elite Silent Assassin ratings on all levels.

PSM3 BUY IT

Hitman Triple Pack

47's three greatest hits in one handy package

Agent 47 is in hiding. "I... I have killed many people... for money," he blabs to a (remarkably forgiving) priest during the opening cut-scenes of *Hitman 2*. It's a brilliant sequence – all sin, secrets and Sicilian cloisters – and though 47's moral depth turns out to be short-lived (within minutes he's donned his black suit and ballers and is happily whacking all and sundry), it nevertheless highlights what the series does best – arch style and atmospheric storytelling.

Certainly, these are the best reasons to revisit this collected trilogy of *Hitman 2*, *Contracts* and *Blood Money* (the earlier, PC-only *Codename 47* is overlooked). Because, aside from the still-potent storylines, the games are showing a little wear and tear. Take *Hitman 2*. First released way back in 2002, the mechanics now seem muddled – 47's trademark swagger becomes a weird, stuttering strut if you turn mid-step, and there's an unresponsive feel to the controls which makes those do-or-die moments frustratingly, literally, hit and miss.

These niggles also magnify the existing problems with the game's trial-and-error approach. What seemed then like forgiveably open-ended mission design now comes off as nebulous disorganisation. There's often no way to work out what will and won't come off – disguises, corpse hiding places – until you try and, all too often, fail.

Bang on target

The joy of seeing all three games lined up together, though, is that you can track how they've improved. *Contracts* – the 2004 follow-up in which an injured 47 relives fuzzy flashback missions – features a much-improved hint system to guide you through the game's less intuitive moments. It's also been visually overhauled, packed with gloomy diffused lighting effects and realistic blood-pool reflections.

Predictably, the best of the bunch – *Blood Money* – is also the most recent. It adds a new control interface which maps situation-specific actions to one of the buttons, allowing for quick, slick death-dealing, and the missions have the most logical and satisfying solutions yet. Best of all, the game's ace climax – featuring a supposedly dead 47 in a crematorium, surrounded by flowers and farewells – perfectly encapsulates the series' sharp, almost decadent design.

Blood Money is still a top title and, inevitable aging aside, it's complemented well by its very accomplished and still gripping predecessors. At £30 this is an absolute bargain. **Nathan Ditum**

Coming out of the closet

For sheer fun, nothing matches leaping out of a closet to pop your surprised intended target.

PSM3 Verdict

***Hitman Triple Pack* contains...**
All three PS2 *Hitman* games | A shiny-headed assassin | Many inventive ways to die

Overall Nothing new for fans of the series, but newcomers should get involved immediately. Essential.

90

Nintendo®

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

The Best Zelda Game Of All Time?

Find out in our epic Zelda: Phantom Hourglass hands-on feature

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PS2

Pub Rockstar Games | **Dev** Rockstar London
Price None | **Release** As it stands, never
Multi-player No

ON THE DISC
Like Rockstar's games? Check out GTAIV now.
Side B

Cool Move
The first lesson you need to learn in *Manhunt 2* is that fair fights are for suckers. So arm yourself, sneak up on an enemy, and jab the @ or ⓜ for a 'Hasty', 'Violent', or 'Gruesome' kill. This particular kill looks pretty gruesome to us.

Manhunt 2

Blood, gore – and unexpected morality – in Rockstar's banned sequel

KNOW IT NOW

A deeper narrative than the first game?	☑
Extra playable character?	☑
Environment-sensitive kills?	☑
Wholesome fun for all the family?	☒

You know what's *so* in right now? No, not flip-flops with little Brazilian flag logos, silly – *torture*. At the movies, films like Hostel and the Saw series squeeze vicarious thrills out of scenes of murder and mutilation. In secretive offshore detainment camps, American GIs force prisoners into stress positions and blast them with Phil Collins records at stun volume. Worst of the bunch, apparently, is *Manhunt 2*. At the time of writing, the UK's British Board Of Film Classification has refused the sequel to Rockstar's 2003 game a rating, citing its "casual sadism" and "unremitting bleakness". Now, certainly, there's no denying this is a violent game, one that relies on violence for its thrill, and thus not for the faint-hearted. While Rockstar's *Grand Theft Auto* series, with its free-roaming maps and fuel-injected vehicles, is about making you feel powerful, *Manhunt*, with its closed, self-contained levels and linear paths, is designed to make you feel threatened and power*less*. Real pressure cooker stuff.

Whereas its predecessor was pretty flimsy on story, though, *Manhunt 2* is far more driven by narrative – and actually, beneath all the blood and gore, is far from devoid of morality. You play Daniel Lamb, an amnesiac who has just been sprung from his cell in the Dixmore Insitute For The Criminally Insane by a freak thunderstorm. Your path out of the hospital – and your attempt to recover your identity – is guided by a fellow prisoner and former government agent, Leo Kasper.

Maim man

Now it's not giving anything away to say there's something odd about Leo. His eerie exhortations to maim and murder echo through your head even when his character isn't on screen. And in the cut-scenes where you keep your neck-cracking bloodlust in check enough to actually hold a cordial conversation with another character, it's not uncommon for them to act as if he's not there. Without wanting to give anything away, if you're thinking Tyler Durden in Fight Club, well, you're about a third of the way there.

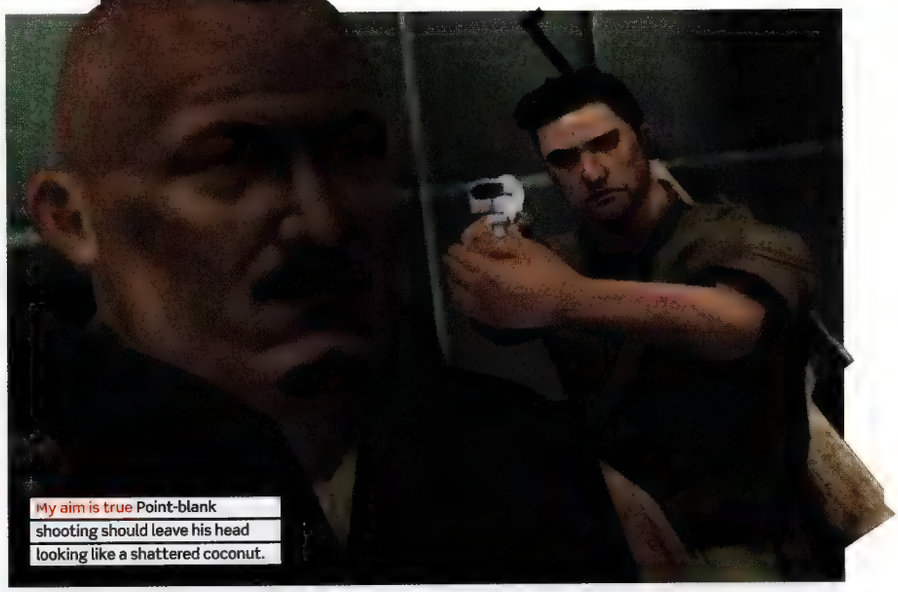
The first kill – a security guard, dispatched with a syringe to the neck – is only messy because Daniel, nauseated by

Stars and stripes This patriotic video is just one of many baffling events to happen to Daniel.

I think we're alone now Your best bet to isolate someone, lure him into the darkness, and have your wicked way.

Watch your back

Elite operatives for the shadowy The Project, these suit-clad gentleman murderers are some of the most daunting foes you'll meet early on in the game.



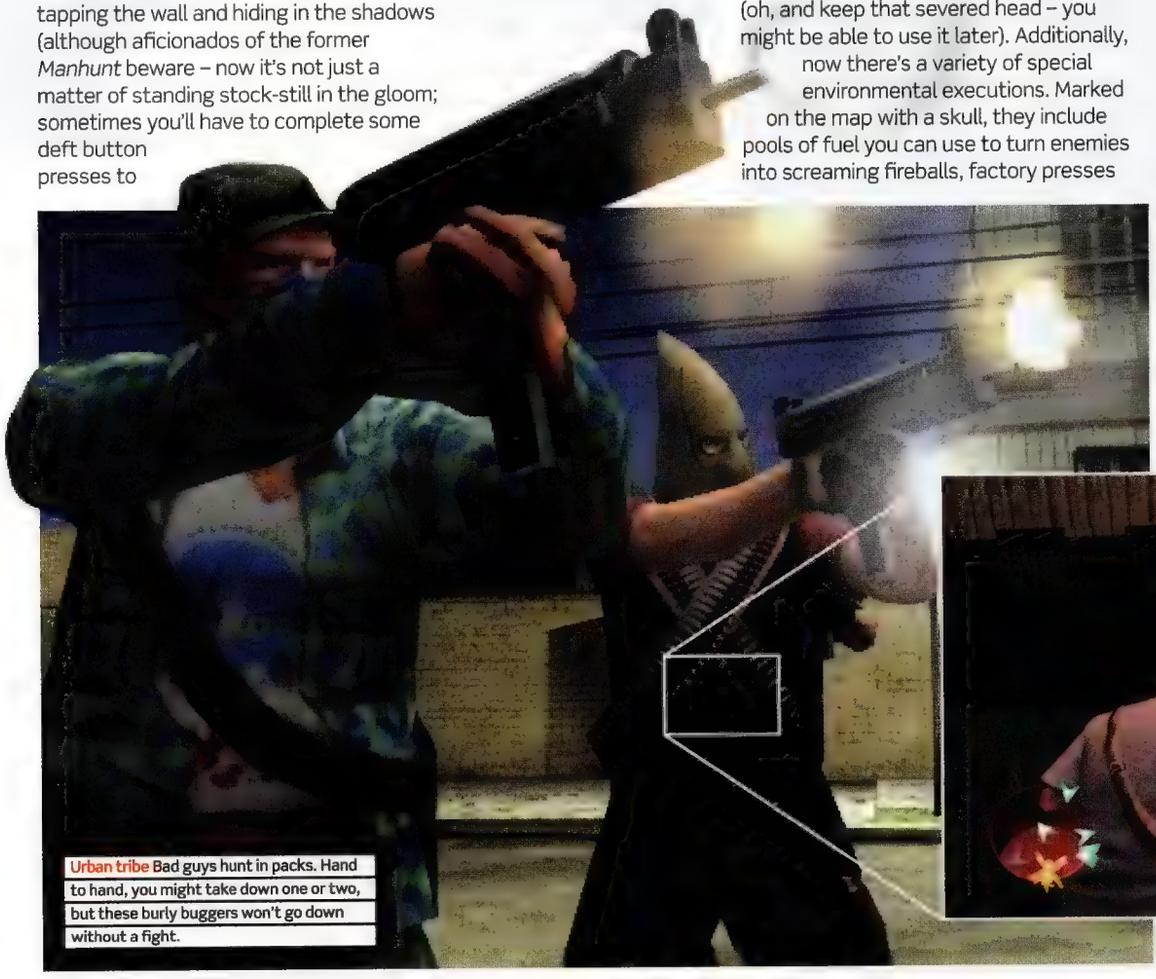
My aim is true Point-blank shooting should leave his head looking like a shattered coconut.

what he's just does, vomits up his lunch. As you roam through the hospital's nightmarish interior, though, Leo's sinister whispers guides you onto more terrible acts of brutality. As with the original *Manhunt*, violence is conducted covertly from the shadows. A map shows the location of roaming enemies, the shade dictating their level of alertness – yellow means they're not aware of your presence, while deep red means they've heard or seen you. Often you're massively outnumbered. So to off an enemy, first you'll need a weapon – anything from a plastic bag or shard of glass to a circular saw or axe should do the trick. Then it's a matter of artful sneaking, distracting an enemy with a tossed brick or bottle, or tapping the wall and hiding in the shadows (although aficionados of the former *Manhunt* beware – now it's not just a matter of standing stock-still in the gloom; sometimes you'll have to complete some deft button presses to avoid being spotted by an enemy gazing right in your direction).

Killing time

Killing a clueless enemy is easy: target them with L2, hold ○ and let rip. Depending on the time you have to make the kill, executions range from swift 'Hasty' kills to limb-severing 'Gruesome' finishers (oh, and keep that severed head – you might be able to use it later). Additionally, now there's a variety of special environmental executions. Marked on the map with a skull, they include pools of fuel you can use to turn enemies into screaming fireballs, factory presses that splatter them to the width of a cheese slice or handy ledges perfect for gaining the velocity it takes to smash a head like a ripe watermelon. Brutal? Yeah, but *most* of them deserve it. A gruesome menagerie of leather-clad perverts, fringe-of-society outlaws, and the sinister Watchdogs – Matrix-like agents in sharp suits and facemasks who work for The Project, the shadowy company that's behind Daniel's amnesia. Yeah, this is a game with something unsavoury under its fingernails. Few other games, certainly, have welded sex and death with such blackly humorous success as this. Take the scene in a adult cinema, where you pick off Project agents with gunfire to the gasps and slaps of an X-rated movie blown up on a massive cinema screen behind you. Those ushers are probably used to cleaning up all sorts of nastiness, but gobbets of brain aren't among them.

Ironically, the controversy that's met *Manhunt 2* is most definitely a sign that Rockstar are doing something right. The wobbly, half-drunk camerawork, the



Urban tribe Bad guys hunt in packs. Hand to hand, you might take down one or two, but these burly buggers won't go down without a fight.

Here's Danny Lone enemies are easy to off. Take this guy out with a crowbar whack to the neck.

Characters

Lamb to the slaughter

Here's what happens when good guys go bad

You play Daniel Lamb, an amnesiac freshly escaped from an asylum for the criminally insane, where you've spent the last six years fulfilling a busy schedule of drooling and receiving electric shocks to the temples. As the narrative to *Manhunt 2* unfolds, Lamb's past is gradually uncovered, fact by fact. Like, why is he here? What is The Pickman Project? Who are all these people who are trying to kill him? And what's the story behind Leo Kasper, the ever-present guide, whose sadistic whisper guides Daniel from one murder to the next? All will be revealed.

"Just who are all these people trying to kill Daniel?"

Silence, please There's no doubting the simplicity of a shotgun blast directly to the face, but there's much to be said for a subtler assassination.

Stat bastard

During this review we performed...

11 plastic bag suffocations

08 electrocutions

34 skull-shattering clubbings

06 deaths by burning

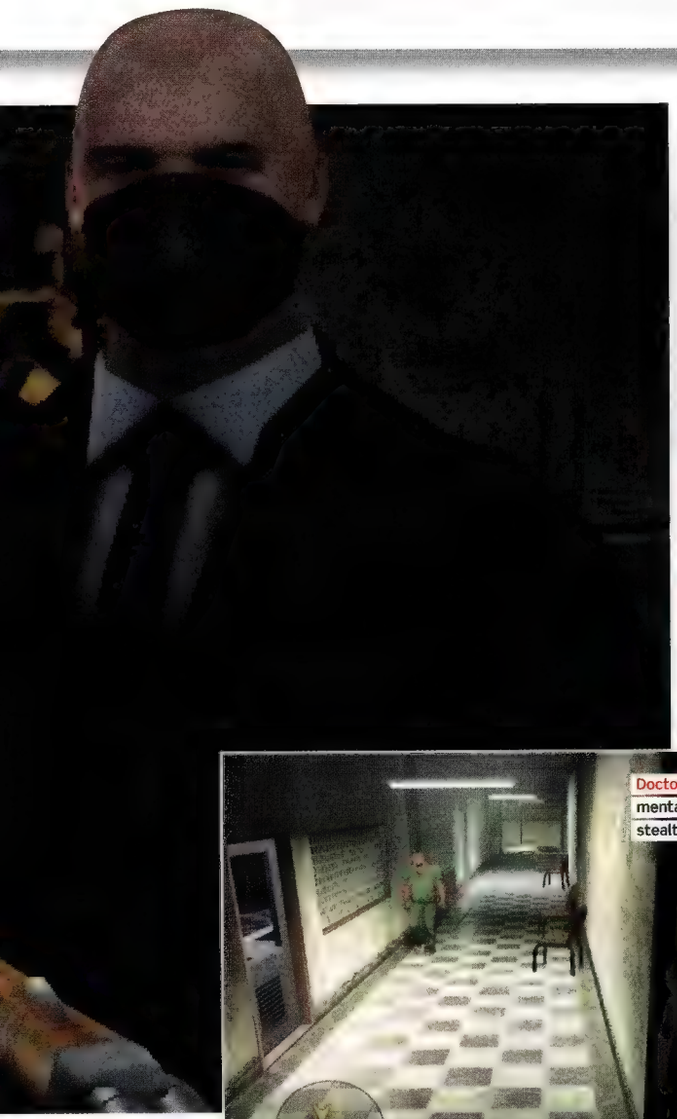
00 random acts of kindness

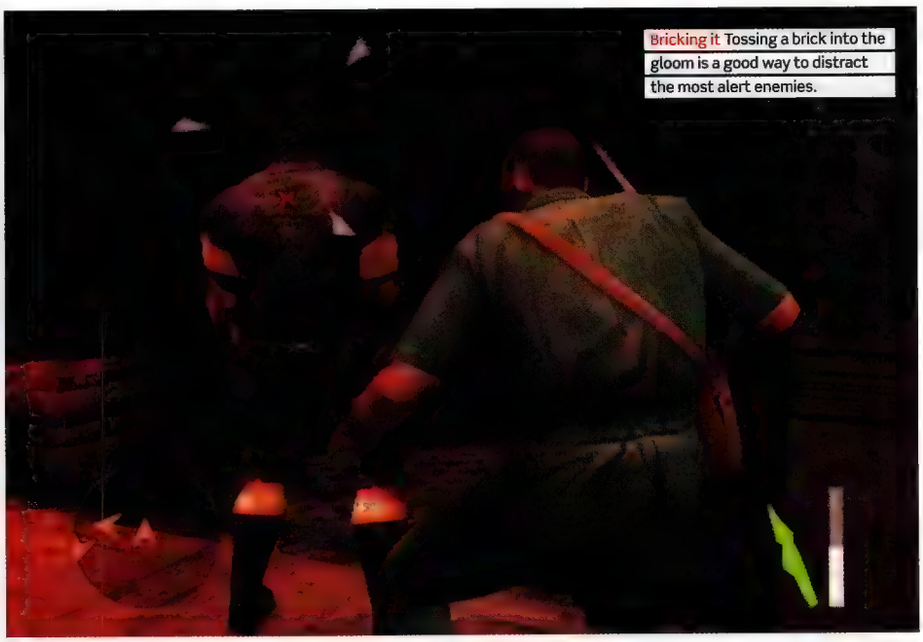
relentless, slimy dialogue, the long passages where it feels like your heart might slip out of your mouth and slide across the floor – when the BBFC say this is a game of unremitting bleakness, well, it's sort of hard to argue. That's the *point*.

If there's a flaw to *Manhunt 2*, it's a problem that plagued its predecessor: guns. It's fine when they're used sparingly, in bursts, but some missions lean on them too heavily. As Daniel's memory begins to return, the past trickles back in a series of flashbacks to six years before. One mission sees you in the role of Leo, descending a skyscraper and picking off Project mercenaries with a sniper rifle. Cliched and beset by rather average AI, it's a too-long scene that rather spoils *Manhunt 2*'s elegantly contrived, slowly ratcheting sense of creeping dread. Additionally, while in theory guns can be used to perform up-close executions, the procedure to perform this – pressing ↑ on the right stick while targeting an enemy at close range – can also mean that if you're not quite close enough, you'll be aiming all over the shop, mostly while nearby hoodlums are shooting you in the head. Indeed, the presence of guns remains a dilemma for the *Manhunt*

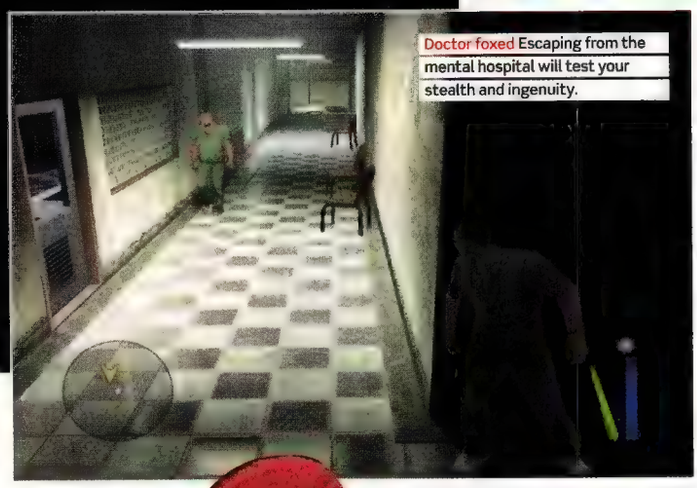
Manhunt 2

"It's a game about morality – how good people can be forced to do awful things"





Bricking it Tossing a brick into the gloom is a good way to distract the most alert enemies.



Doctor foxed Escaping from the mental hospital will test your stealth and ingenuity.

Safe from harm

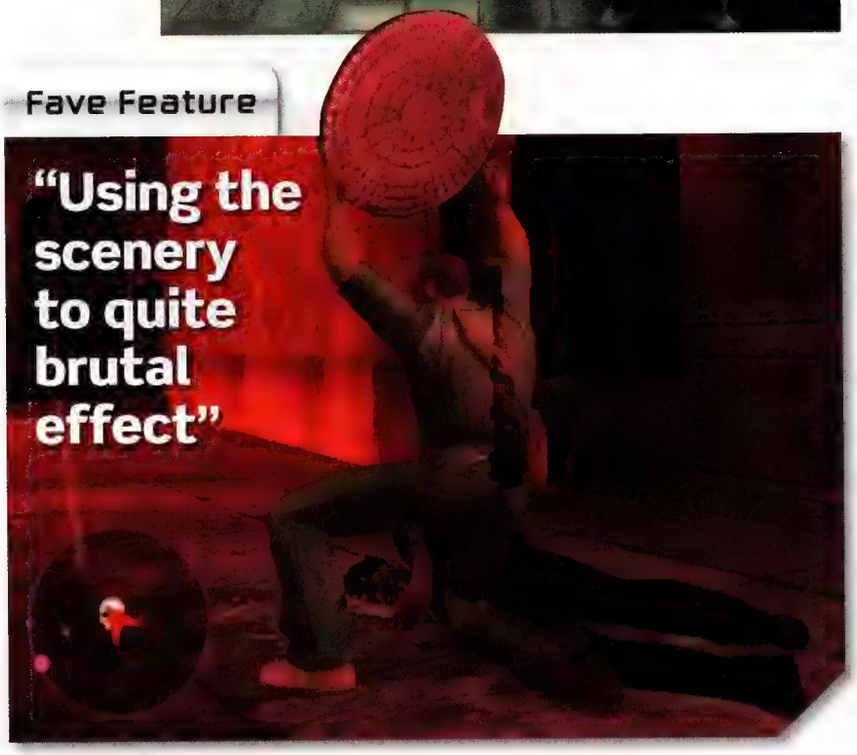
Hiding against walls is a good way of keeping your cover. Knock on the wall to tempt guards towards you, and if you've got a hooked weapon like a crowbar, you can get one over on him before the poor sap's even had time to blink.

series – most games reward your progress by offering up an increasing arsenal of exciting and destructive weapons, but what do you do when your game's speciality is learning how to sever someone's spinal cord with a sharpened toothpick? *Manhunt 2* is a little closer to solving this teaser than the first game, but it doesn't quite solve it.

Do it your way

Still, for the most part, this is an artful, engaging game that's far more about strategy and patience than merely dumb brutality. And interestingly too, this is a game that senses how you play it: act gruesome and you accumulate style points, play stealthy and avoid combat and you go without, but have the promise of unlocking extra features after the game's completion. Meaning, actually, that far from the BBFC's crowing about *Manhunt 2*'s lack of moral core, that this is actually a game about morality – namely, how good, essentially conscientious people can be forced, cajoled, or brainwashed into doing awful or reprehensible things, but how they can also eventually regain their humanity. Presuming the world can actually get their hands on it at some point, hopefully soon that will become clear. **Louis Pattison**

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***Manhunt 2* contains...**

More blood than a butcher's floor | Kinky sex
Several quite horrifying moments

Overall There's more to this than controversy. Intelligent, demanding brains, patience... and a strong stomach

83

Konami | PSP | Out now (import)

Parodius Portable

A quintuple-pack of blasting lunacy

Slide with me Watch out for bullet-firing penguins here.

At some point in the late '80s, Konami suits held a meeting to discuss how they could rejuvenate their sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up series *Gradius*. And, evidently, the conclusion they came to was this: it needed more space-travelling penguins, more aubergine-spouting mountains and more naked ladies in bathtubs. Oh, and a power-up that attaches a giant megaphone to the front of your 'craft' that screams ludicrous phrases such as "SHAVING IS BORING!" at your enemies. What could be more sensible?

Absurd it all before

But the thing is, these mentalists were onto something. *Parodius* and its four sequels – all contained in this package – play almost exactly like *Gradius* (Parody + *Gradius* = *Parodius*, you see), with only the addition of some Twinbee power-up mechanics to distinguish it from the source material. But whereas *Gradius Portable* could be a slog at times, here the revisiting of *Parodius'* five titles is a joy because you never quite know what's around the corner next.

The quality of the five titles can vary – understandable as the titles span from 1988's MSX original all the way to 1995's *Sexy Parodius*, which was actually a PSOne title, believe it or not. A curious feature is that the titles get progressively easier, so you might want to play this compilation back to front.

So, good old-fashioned twitch gaming, wearing a not-so-old fashioned coat. It's not the perfect tribute to one of Konami's odder moments – a lack of extras and some slowdown see to that – but as long as you're not a big baby about it, this is one of PSP's finer retro moments. **Alex Dale**

PSM3 Verdict

Classic, if samey, package full of funny moments.

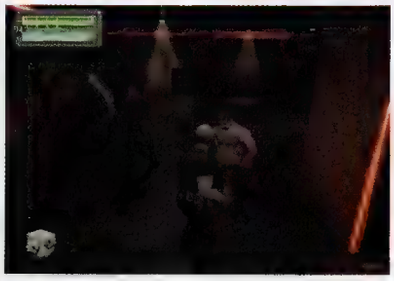
81

Gift of the grab The opening level of *Fantastic Parodius* is set in a in huge arcade grabbing machine.

Empire | PS2 | Out now

The Shield

Not so much bad cop as unplayably awful cop



This tame tie-in fails utterly to capture the fizzing energy of the breakneck cop show. But initial appearances are encouraging – they use the opening credits from the series – but as soon as the game starts things fall to pieces.

You play as detective Vic Mackey, basically a shaved bear with a police badge. The action consists of collecting evidence by playing a dreadful minigame, sneaking about – even though that *never* happens on the show – and shooting people with perhaps the worst combat mechanic on PS2. Even the most rabid of fans will be disappointed. **Nathan Ditum**

31

Konami | PSP | Out now

Marvel Trading Card Game

Deal us out, thanks

No game should ever be this complicated to get into. Card-based strategy isn't everyone's idea of fun, but we were drawn to *Marvel Trading Card Game*, with the promise of Spidey and company at our disposal. But this is tougher to crack than Wolverine's exo-skeleton. The text is too small for PSP's tiny screen, and the myriad of complex instructions makes it a real drag. Facing off against foes and 'trumping' your opposite number should be compelling but it isn't. And with loading times between battles lasting an age, you'd be better off playing the real-life card game equivalent. **Nathan Irvine**

51

Midway | PSP | Out now

Hot Brain

Turn your head into a volcano of activity

Contrary to the title, we're playing Midway's latest brain training effort and can't feel the temperature rising inside our noggins. Despite this – and according to the in-game record – our old grey matter is still getting a serious workout via *Hot Brain*. Covering logic, maths, memory, concentration and language, *Hot Brain* is built to 'heat up' the separate parts of your brain that deal with each of these tasks.

It's more user-friendly than the other PSP brain trainer *Mind Quiz*, with a nutty professor presenting the whole thing and a wider variety of grey-matter boosting puzzles. However, while it may well make you think quicker, it gets boring even faster. It seems learning isn't exactly a barrel of laughs, no matter how many professors you dress it up with. **Nathan Irvine**

70

Xplosiv | PS2 | Out now

Lucinda Green's Equestrian Challenge

Keeping glue factories that bit busier...

Think *G1 Jockey*, but for posh, pony-fixated ten-year-olds with names like Jasmine or – hey – Lucinda. *LGEC* sees you take part in various horse trials. There's dressage – showing off your horse's obedience via a rhythm-action game so simple a blind amputee could manage it; cross-country, where you sprint along a course containing a series of jumps, and showjumping, which is the same as cross-country but shorter. You don't get to race other horses, but you *do* get to pet your steed and feed him carrots. *LGEC* works, just, but there's really 'neigh' point in playing it. **David Cook**

43

PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months

Oblivion
Ubisoft | PS3
"An incredible, open-ended experience, although one you'll need patience with to truly savour. But there's a phemonenal amount to get stuck into."
PSM3 Rating 93%

Tomb Raider Anniversary
Eidos | PS2
"Stays true to Lara's original spirit and combines it with a visionary redesign of her world. A fitting tribute to PlayStation's first lady."
PSM3 Rating 91%

Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops
Konami | PSP
"A compromised imitation of a classic – though you can do *anything* you can in *MGS3* – but one of the deepest games on PSP."
PSM3 Rating 83%

Activision | PS2 | Out now

Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam

Guess the operative word in that title...

It's the first Wii-to PS2 conversion. A shame, then, that *Downhill Jam* – think *SSX* on a skateboard, rather than the traditional free-roaming *Hawk* trickfest – has been ported to PS2 so inelegantly. Murky graphics and occasional slowdown muddy up the action, and don't get us started on the time we got hit by a car and then kept being respawned on top of said motor for about two minutes, thus spending 120 seconds constantly dying and regenerating in the same spot. Shabby.

Still, that's not to say *Downhill Jam* is no fun at all. It is, at least at first. There's a decent sense of speed and a reasonable amount of tricks, so pelting down the slopes of Scotland and San Francisco is diverting for a while. But the gameplay never really changes, never really rewards and never really excites. Only *Hawk* nuts are likely to appreciate this one. **David Cook**

60

Ignition | PS2 | Out now

King Of Fighters Maximum Impact 2

Veteran scrapper gets to grips with 3D

This is *KOF*'s second stab at 3D after the first *Maximum Impact* was released in 2005. Transferring the series – which had developed a balanced control system over its lifespan – to the third dimension proved to be tricky, and the conversion felt rushed and incomplete.

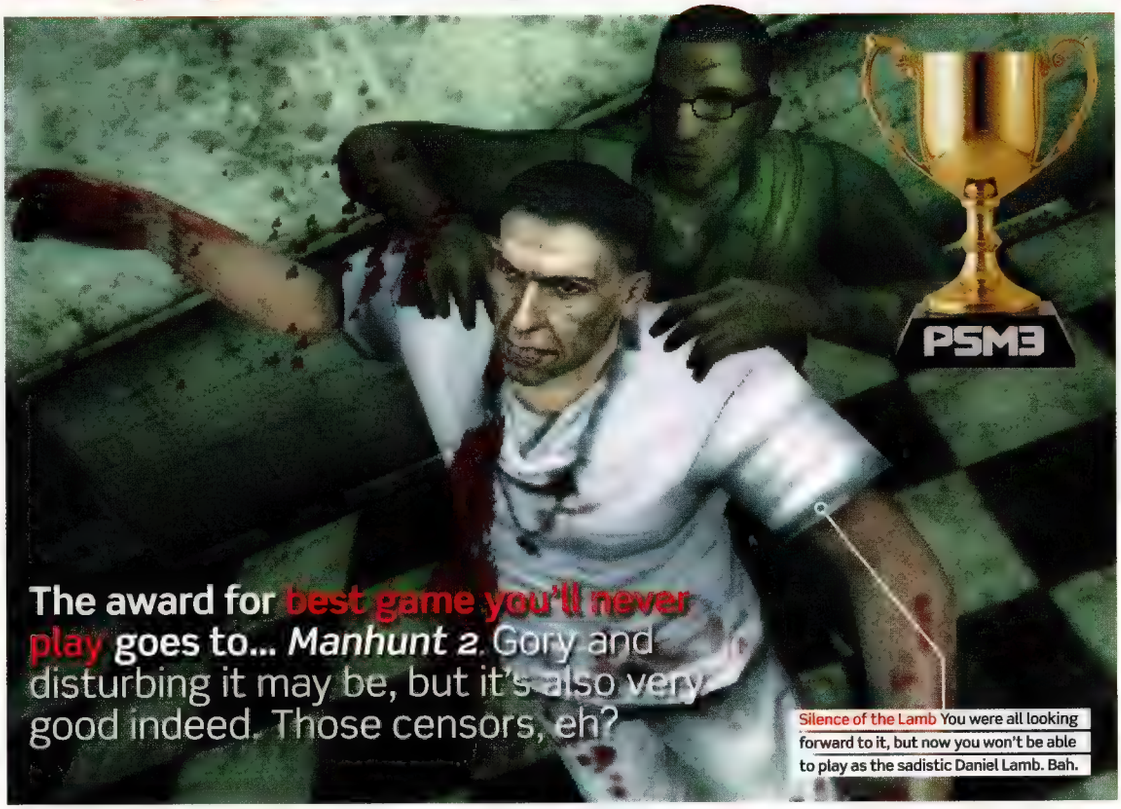
The good news is that *MI2* is an improvement. The major bugs – dodgy collision detection included – have been worked out, and the simple two punch/two kick controls are accessible and fun, on a basic level.

The less good news is that the game is frustratingly difficult. It persists with the old arcade sham of giving you an easy ride in the first round before improving beyond all probability in the second, and the AI fighters exploit the game's cheap and frustratingly overpowered combo system to the full. Outside the safety of its 2D bubble, *KOF*'s shortcomings are exposed. Still playable, though. **Nathan Ditum**

67

PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews



The award for best game you'll never play goes to... *Manhunt 2*. Gory and disturbing it may be, but it's also very good indeed. Those censors, eh?

Silence of the Lamb You were all looking forward to it, but now you won't be able to play as the sadistic Daniel Lamb. Bah.

The best value award goes to...

Hitman Triple Pack

Three brilliant baldy stealth classics in one pack? Yes, please. Never played a *Hitman* game? Now's the time to try the most inventive killing games on PS2.

The weirdest game award goes to...

Parodius Portable

Laser-firing penguins, space pigs... anything peculiar you can possibly imagine is probably in *Parodius*. Worth a look for the sheer insanity.

Hi-Score Table

☐ Hitman Triple Pack	p74 90%
☐ GRAW2	p64 86%
☐ Manhunt 2	p76 83%
☐ Parodius Portable	p80 81%
☐ Hot Brain	p80 70%
☐ King Of Fighters: MI2	p81 67%
☐ Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	p81 60%
☐ Transformers	p70 52%
☐ Marvel Trading Card Game	p80 51%
☐ Lucinda Green's...	p80 43%
☐ The Shield	p80 31%

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Casper's Scare School Blast

Do kids still like Casper? We're not sure. Anyway, we're willing to bet this is a cutesy platformer with about as much merit as a sawblade made of jelly babies.

American Chopper 2: Full Throttle Activision

Never seen American Chopper on telly? Imagine Pimp My Ride, but with bikes. Original thinking there. Anyway, this is its second game. The first was awful. *Awful.*

An American Tail Blast

We're willing to be this is a cutesy platformer with... oh, we did that one. This is released to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the release of the movie. Except its 20th birthday was *last* year. D'oh.

PS3

Pub Sony | **Dev** Ninja Theory
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI A slasher that'll batter *Genji*.

ON THE DISC
See more *Heavenly Sword* on the next disc

Heavenly Sword

Clinical. That's how fighting with Nariko feels. Comparisons with *Devil May Cry* and *God Of War* might be justified, but there's none of the former's showmanship or the latter's sadism. And *Heavenly Sword*'s heroine isn't exactly fighting for her life: the curse on the blade she's swinging means she's a corpse come the closing credits no matter what. No, it's simple. The king has to die. So does anyone on his side. And Nariko's going to kill them all.

Ambitious doesn't seem like a big enough word for *Heavenly Sword*. We've all heard whispers about how Nariko's hair uses more processing power than a small infantry division of lesser games. Playwright Steven Berkoff – yes, General Orlov from Octopussy – stars as a boss. The Prague philharmonic are doing the music. It's a big project, a PS3-exclusive console-shifter, and it shows. Everyone involved talks about interactive movies, pushing back the boundaries of motion-capturing, how much they've spent. But none of this says what it's like as a game.

White girls can't jump

The first thing you notice about combat is that there's no jump button. *DMC* devotees will be used to pogoing out of trouble; in *God Of War*, leaping around is all part of the

Vicious as Kratos, cuter than Lara: is Nariko, wielder of the Heavenly Sword, PS3's first true action hero?

Chopping mad These ponytailed chaps are perfect as combo fodder – they can't even block. Losers.

fun. Being rooted to the ground feels strange, but works because they've used the spare button sensibly. ○ is your basic attack, ✕ deals with blocking and picking things up. The key is △ – prod it when an enemy lunges in and she'll reverse their attack with extreme prejudice, jamming a sword through their guts or snapping their legs like breadsticks. Holding down L1 sends Nariko into a whirling flurry of chain attacks – also useful for deflecting arrows – and holding R1 makes her swing with heavy, guard-breaking slices. As more enemies appear, it feels like a Jet Li film - first they circle cautiously, attacking one by one as Nariko counters with ease. Gradually the tempo rises until she's spinning like a tornado, killing everyone who gets in her way. Most enemies are good at blocking, so God Of War style aggression is out of the question. The pace is very different – definitely a good thing.

Anyway, the lack of a jump button doesn't strictly mean that Nariko can't leave the ground. ◎ is reserved for her special attacks – built up by doing reversals and available in one of three flavours. Level one is a basic man-killer – best used on heavy-set bad lads, it sees Nariko perch on their back and pop their spine. Level two

From Heaven and Hell

Nariko is accompanied by a parade of terrifying misfits...

NARIKO

The prophecy said a warrior to lead his people in war would appear... and a girl turned up. Nariko's doomed to die, but she wants to take the king too...

KAI

Adopted as Nariko's little sister when she was six, crossbow-savant Kai thinks fighting's just a game... and one that she's damn good at. Eats worms, FYI.

KING BOHAN

Thinks he's a messenger from Heaven. But his plan – capture the sword as a symbol of order – has progressed into him going murderously crazy.

WHIPTAIL

Bohan's fave: a lady with a love of self-mutilation and cannibalism. Her kung-fu is great, but the king's keener on her bedroom skills...

ROACH

Roach is heir to the throne – but he's less interested in courtly duties than setting up deathmatches between prisoners.

FLYING FOX

A fan of murder, Flying Fox is the oldest of Bohan's generals. Only on staff because Bohan fears what would happen if he went elsewhere.

Spin me round A few guards? Easy.
We'll be home in time for tea.
Numbers game Hmm. There are
slightly more than we thought, but...
Death by the dozen Jesus Christ - lucky our arms
aren't getting tired. Only another thousand to go...

Three become one

The Heavenly Sword Fighting Levels

The Heavenly Sword isn't just one weapon: it's three. Depending on how fast you're attacking, the sword is either a set of lightweight knife-flails – similar to Kratos' Blades Of Chaos – a pair of knives or one glowing blade. The plot is that the sword drains the life force of anyone who uses it – and sends mad – and that Nariko's clan have protected it for years. It's all detailed in a set of anime shorts to be released on the PS Network in the run-up to launch.

"*Heavenly Sword* beats *God Of War* at its own spectacular game"

sees her jump into the air with her victim, then hurtle to the ground and take out all the enemies in the vicinity. Level three? Nariko whirls furiously, killing everyone she hits. Also available are traditional air-launcher moves, which can be followed by flicking the Sixaxis skywards to leap after an airborne opponent and beat them up before they hit the ground. Finally, of course, there are quicktime events. Here, *Heavenly Sword* manages to beat *God Of War* at its own spectacular game. In the opening sequence, she runs along a set of gigantic ropes being cut by her enemies, leaping between them like an Olympic hurdler. After all the enemies are dead, she slashes the final rope herself, sending the pillar it's attached to hurtling into a bustling square before yet another massive fight. You might have seen the scrap with Steven Berkoff already: as Nariko takes on Flying Fox, the pair duel in the air like Chow Yun Fat and Zhang ZiYi in Crouching Tiger. It's spectacular. During boss battles, close-ups show the facial detail on the bosses as they taunt you, while you carry on battling enemies on the main screen. It's atmospheric too – clever scripting and sound has enemies that feel like more than just disposable grunts. "Join the army, they said, have fun, they said," grumbles one, trudging forward to meet a pointy end. "She's coming!" squeals a group of archers, as Nariko deflects their arrows and sprints at them. By contrast, Sword's heavy hitters are quiet and stoic.

Bolt from the blue Hold the button down after firing and you can watch the corpses arc in slow motion.

Say hello to my little friend

Like a medieval version of Bjork, Nariko's childhood pal Kai is cute, slightly kooky and can go crazy on a moment's notice. In chapter two, she covers Nariko's father's escape with her repeating crossbow, sniping enemies as they attack. The catch? The Sixaxis lets her steer arrows in defiance of physics, bending them around pillars and up arses.

Blast Tango Careful with the ammo – anyone you don't blow up has to be stabbed to death.

Heavenly Sword's got one more trick up its billowy cotton sleeves, too. Unlike *GoW* and *DMC*, virtually everything is breakable: tables, chairs, barrels, whatever. What's more, anything that moves can be picked up – with a diving forward roll if it's a barrel, say, or with a cheeky Jackie-Chan style foot-flick if it's a traditional Chinese stool. Once Nariko's toting something, she can either sling it into the crowd unguided or – much better – hold down the ⊗ button to follow its trajectory in slo-mo, applying gentle aftertouch with motion control. This has its comedy moments – you can do it with dead bodies or melons, for instance – but it's also more useful than it sounds. At range, you can use it to catch archers in the face with a hammer. Up close, you can ricochet Frisbee-shaped metal hats between two or three enemies, pulling off the kung-fu equivalent of a bank shot.

Riddle me this

Expect the throwing to come in handy with the puzzles. From what we've seen, these aren't quite as taxing as *God Of War*'s, there to punctuate the action instead of being a huge chunk of it. A typical test might involve bonging razor-hats off a gong to open a door – simple, but satisfying. With no jumping to worry about, you simply prod ⊗ when prompted to shin up walls and clamber up poles.

We're not too worried about the puzzles, though. At worst, *Heavenly Sword*'s a beautiful demonstration of PS3's grunt, using terrifying facial animation and dramatic staging to transform a normal slasher into something spectacular. At best, it could transcend *Goddess Of War* comparisons to become PS3's first essential exclusive buy. And if that happens, Sony have really got themselves a match made in heaven.

PSM3 Reckons

Will the puzzles be a bit one note? Will little Kai start to grate? Maybe, but what really matters is whether *Heavenly Sword* can keep up the pace it sets in the early going. At the moment, the combat feels fast and fresh, constantly inventive and dizzyingly exciting: hopefully more attacks will be layered into the combat system as Nariko learns the sword's powers. And yeah, we doubt she'll end up dead, too.

PSM3 probes Andy Serkis

The man who is Gollum and King Kong gets his first game role

Andy Serkis is best known for playing Gollum and Smeagol in Peter Jackson's Lord Of The Rings trilogy, but he's also motion-captured the giant ape in King Kong, played Moors murderer Ian Brady and sung on stage with Tenacious D. Now he's playing despot King Bohan in Heavenly Sword. PSM3 caught up with him in London.

PSM3: You've played Gollum who was quite evil, King Kong – who was sort of nice – and now the king, who seems totally evil again. Which is the most fun?
Andy Serkis: They're all interesting, it just depends how they're written. You can have badly written bad guys. What was appealing about this project was acting in a new medium and bringing truthfully-captured characters into a videogame environment. Also, I came on board mainly as the dramatic director, so I got involved in the early stages of the character development, casting and rehearsal.

PSM3: The other actresses were saying this was their first motion-capture experience. What kind of advice did you give them?
AS: The main thing is that there's really no difference between acting and motion-capturing. The research, the trying to embody a character is the same. But the main thing about motion-capture is that you're sort of puppeteering a version of yourself. You can calibrate that by manipulating certain things about your personality.

PSM3: We've read that you spent a while studying monkeys in preparation for Kong. Did you do anything at all like that for Heavenly Sword?
AS: Well, Bohan was this dictator that created his own moral universe where he was right. Rather than just playing an evil guy, you have to sort of believe in what you're doing – most dictators do. So I've been reading about dictators. Also, I'm pretty hopeless at games, but I've been getting familiar with them. I love playing Shadow Of The Colossus, just riding round on my horse looking for colossi. I haven't actually found any yet, though.

PSM3: Part of the beauty of motion-capturing is that you can play any character. Bearing that in mind, if you were designing a character for yourself, what would it be like? We'd definitely be a ninja robot.
AS: Well, I don't think there's much point motion-capturing a human character. So even these characters, what they are, they're slightly heightened and exaggerated. I always like to play that sort of character, but I can't think of anything specific right now.

PSM3: Are we right in thinking this is the first time when more than one character's been motion-captured at once? Does that make it easier?
AS: Well yes, because it's like shooting a film. It's much easier when you've got other people to work with...

PSM3: Can you see a time when people get Academy awards for their performance in a videogame?
AS: Well, I'm slightly ambivalent about the difference between playing a character and being motion-captured. It's no different from being in costume, except that instead of having synthetic materials on your face you've been captured in a game. Simple as that.

"I love riding my horse, looking for colossi. I haven't seen any yet..."

Stars from Heaven

The *Heavenly* crew have their say...

Anna Torv is...

NARIKO

"Nariko's such a great character – she's strong and independent. And, being in a computer game, she looks brilliant all the time."

Lydia Baksh is...

KAI

"I wanted Kai to be like an animal, so I based her around the movements of cats. My background is in dance, so this was... interesting."

Tameem Antoniades is

DIRECTING

"I'm inspired by classics like Crouching Tiger, but also Spaghetti Westerns and Road To Perdition, which is like a classic samurai revenge film."

Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

Extended Play

Start

CELEBRATE

88 How *Tiger Woods* keeps making par
Why EA's golf franchise crushes challengers with a nine-iron.

GENIUS

90 The 10 greatest bits of *Tomb Raider Anniversary*
It's Lara without her top on. But not like that...

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94 *Manhunt*'s most gruesome kills
Seeing as you can't play *Manhunt 2*, look back in anguish on these...

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96 Meet the acting ninja cat in Shadow Hearts 3
The Meowminator certainly ain't no pussy...

SECRETS

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Including a secret ending to *Dragon Quest*.

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With codes for *Medal Of Honor Vanguard*, *The Darkness* and more.

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As its sequel nears, we look back at the original.

NATION

100 *Silent Hill* movie terrifies the internet
Amateur *Silent Hill* film shames the Hollywood version. Be scared.

How Tiger Woods keeps making par

Tiger Woods games have been a staple of the yearly EA line-up for the best part of a decade now, and although we got a bit weary of them eventually (not that the game-buying public ever did, with each new addition selling loads) the series' move to PS3 rejuvenated our interest this year. So here's our history of *Tiger Woods* titles across PS2 and PS3, from the first ever 'swing with the stick' controls to the craziness of 'Tiger Proofing', it's all here. Expect another Tiger game on PS3 soon. Long may he roar.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001

The first Tiger game on PS2. By now Tiger had appeared in two PSone versions and was already a familiar face. But *PGA Tour 2001* only gave us six golfers and just three courses. This was also the first to rely on EA's love of the sticks for club control – pull the stick back for the backswing then bring it forward straight and true for your follow through. But it worked. A brave move, but for us, it paid off. Not so the bizarre 'green morphing' effect that exaggerated the green's curve in order to show you the breaks? Why not just improve the graphics so you could see the curve for yourself? Hmm.

Birdie At last, a next-gen, realistic looking golf game.
Bogey So where are all the courses?
Verdict? In the bunker.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Now that's more like it: six courses. Plus a much-easier-to-unlock Tigers Dream 18's mode, in which Tiger offered a compilation of his fave holes from courses around the world for play. At least the putting system (complete with all-new 'Caddy Tip') was way better this time. You could see the green's curve though the line that shows you exactly where you're ball is going to go. In fact, now it was too easy. New modes? How about the first appearance of the split-screen Speed Golf mode – a crazed dash from green to tee. And welcome to the first of EA's hilarious made-up golfers. We all hoped they wouldn't bother with these next year...

Birdie Lots of courses, and Speed Golf is great fun.
Bogey Putting can now be done blindfolded.
Verdict On the fairway.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

It's the first PS3 Tiger and so the series finally gets a major kick in the pants by virtue of finally looking different. Thank you PS3.

Tiger Woods 07 packed a respectable 12 courses, and the graphics allowed for a much more realistic aiming system – rather than fly an arc around you, move an aiming zone let you see where you wanted to aim for. Likewise putting is the best ever, though an ideal Putt camera showed the line if you weren't able to read the (improved, hi-res) greens yourself. They even had a token tap at using the Sixaxis control too, with pad tilts replacing the button tapping for in-flight tweaking.

Birdie Gorgeous looks and finely-tuned gameplay.

Bogey Less modes and options than the previous PS2 game.

Verdict Par for the course.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

It's round about here that the EA ideas factory took a bit of a holiday. After adding so much to the game that just getting a sensible game of golf out of it required juggling a quadrillion menu options EA finally admitted defeat in 2006. It's not that it's a bad game, just that the advantages of this version over 2005 are few – when a game has to give you an option on the main menu called 'New Features' then you know you're in all manner of trouble.

15 courses was a step back, but of that number seven were brand new, real-life outings. And the grid system makes a return after complaints about last year's omission.

Birdie More sensible than the off-the-scale madness of the 2005 game.

Bogey Can't we have the PS3 version yet?

Verdict In the water.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005

Yeah – Tiger Proofing... Er, what? Yes, in 2005 we got to 'Tiger Proof' our courses – a rather half-hearted hole-creation feature that let us tweak perfectly well-designed courses in order to make them impossible. More morphing fun festered in a new GameFace mode (an even more extensive tweak-fest than last years option) and new chipping and approach shot options finally gave the game the iron-play realism of the genuine article.

The Pro Shop (introduced in 2004) now featured 2500 things to waste your virtual cash on – you could even tweak your golfer's swing to... wait, why would you want to design a *swing*? Still, the option was there.

Birdie The design-a-swing feature proved that they thought of everything.

Bogey Pretty much perfect.

Verdict Hole in one.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

It was the first *Tiger* with Create-a-golfer mode. The tools that gave the previous game's fantasy characters such diversity were now in your hands – make four-foot, 40-stone trolls, ladies with bigger breasts than heads, or be the owner of the world's scariest Mexican.

The biggest shocker was that despite banging on about it in early versions, the finished UK game lacked the online play EA promised. But it wasn't all bad. For a kick-off this was the first *PGA Tour* game with the *full* PGA Tour in it... All 52 weeks of the year have courses to play and tournaments to contend in. More figures? The game swelled to 19 courses, 15 pros and 12 fantasy freaks.

And modes went through the roof: Best Ball, Alternate Shot, Long Drive Shootout, Stableford Scoring, and even Battle Golf. Shame the graphics didn't have a similar revamp, though.

Birdie The Create-a-golfer mode is a fun-packed freak factory. Nice.

Bogey Looks a little to similar to last year's game.

Verdict Birdie.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

Tiger really started to find his stride here. There were 12 courses (shame three of them were made up, though) but there also 15 real golfers (and 12 comedy ones created by the over-fertile EA imagination). Add on a truly bewildering number of modes – including the first My Tour mode, which lets you live your life as a pro, taking on each tournament according to the real-life golfer's calendar and (hopefully) amassing a fortune on the way – and you had a winner.

Similarly bewildering were the tweaks to the control system, adding a range of shot styles and mid-flight taps. (as if pulling the stick back and forward dead straight wasn't hard enough already). Still, we loved the (rather silly) power boost trick – get the shot perfect and the camera wheels around Matrix-style before Tiger hits the ball into the stratosphere.

Birdie Power boost – it's daft but we love it.

Bogey Suddenly the game's a bit hard to play.

Verdict On the green.

Time, then, to whip out those trusty pistols and blast Dino right between his stupid eyes.
The prehistoric food chain may save you from raptors, but you're next on the menu.

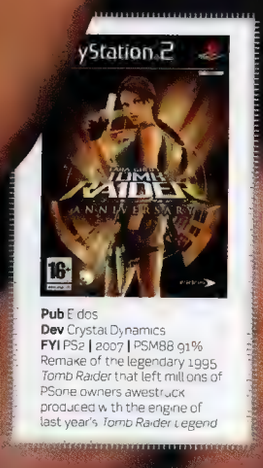
PLAYSTATION GENIUS

10 of the greatest moments in Tomb Raider: Anniversary

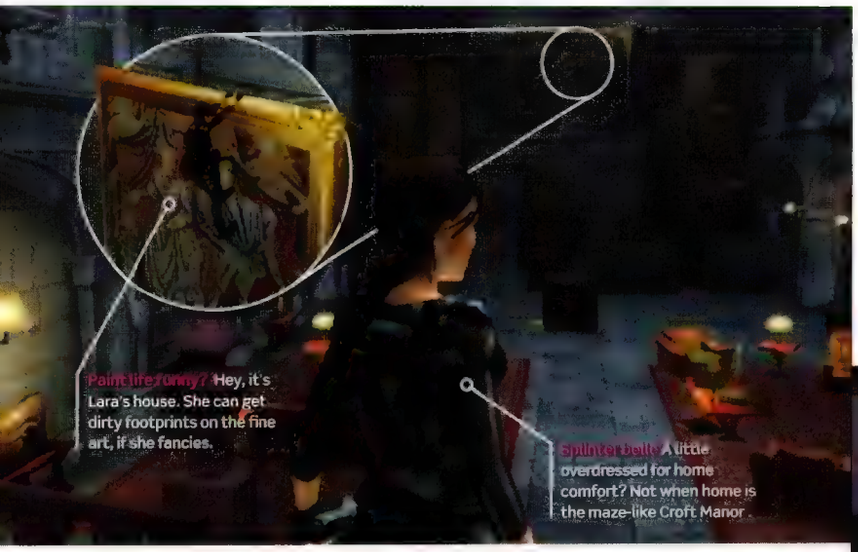
Steve Bailey/Nathan Ditum

1 WRECKING THE T-REX

During the first few hours of play, you'd be forgiven for thinking that *Tomb Raider*'s bestiary of enemies is nothing other than the stuff of National Geographic – bears, wolves, crocodiles and the like. Push on to The Lost World area though, and *Anniversary* gets Jurassic on your ass, dropping you into the path of an enraged, prehistoric Goliath with teeth like kitchen knives. And Lara takes it down with just her pistols...



Pub Eidos
Dev Crystal Dynamics
FYI PS2 | 2007 | PSM88 91%
Remake of the legendary 1995 *Tomb Raider* that left millions of PSone owners awestruck produced with the engine of last year's *Tomb Raider Legend*


Paint life? Only? Hey, it's Lara's house. She can get dirty footprints on the fine art, if she fancies.
Splinter belle A little overdressed for home comfort? Not when home is the maze-like Croft Manor.

3 SEEING LARA'S 'BIRTHDAY SUIT'

Ever wanted to see what goes on underneath that taut, pale blue sleeveless top Lara ponces around in? Well, now you can. Sadly, however, the reality is about as sexy as a tramp's shoelace – complete the game to unlock *TRA*'s 'Textureless mode' cheat, which strips the game world of all detail – a family-friendly nude patch that leaves everything to the imagination. It looks strangely beautiful, mind.

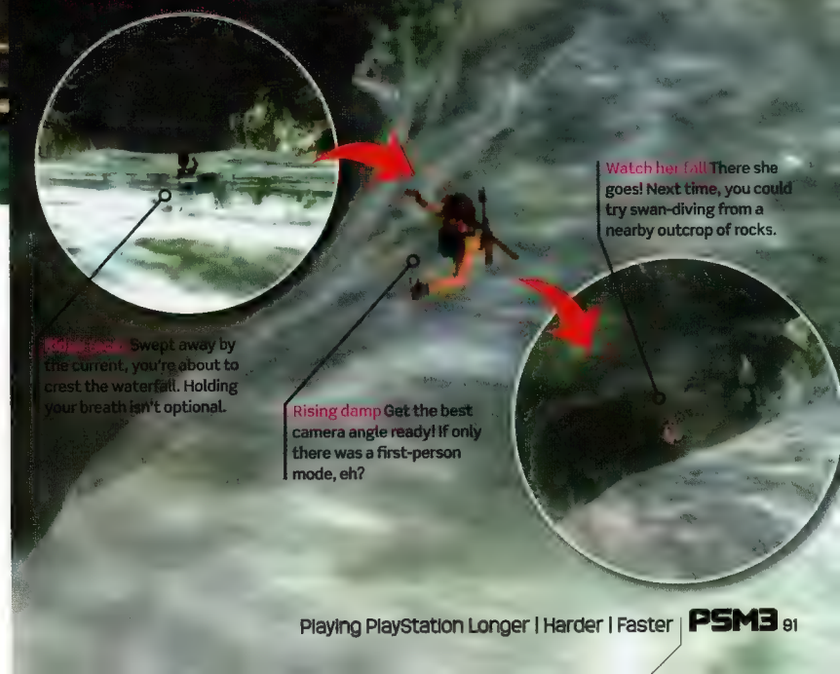
2 GOING THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

After looting ancient tombs and sacred vaults, it's only fair that we get to rifle through Lara's own home turf. Croft Mansion isn't your typical posh gaff, however – it's an enigmatic puzzle all of its own, an intricate domestic labyrinth that you'll have to truly work to explore. Rife with secret passageways and nooks, you'll happily spend as much time in m'lady's chambers as anywhere her adventures take her.

Pure original Those shorts, eh? Classically iconic, they are. Inspiration for a thousand cosplayers.
Style icon Do you have any idea what's going on in these 'Style Units' bonus levels? Let us know, Einstein.

5 BOMBING IT

The beauty of *Anniversary* is that it doesn't just mindlessly update the standout moments from the original *Raider*, it reformulates them, injecting them with a fizzing energy that has you wowing all over again. The waterfall in the Lost World is one of these moments – all tension and worry as you inch precariously up treacherous rocks and across broken bridges, and then flooding release as you leap into the torrenting stream to be swept into the pool below. CANNONBALL!


Watch her fall There she goes! Next time, you could try swan-diving from a nearby outcrop of rocks.
Rising damp Get the best camera angle ready! If only there was a first-person mode, eh?

4 THE STYLISH PLAYGROUND

Once you've collected every relic hidden in the game you'll gain access to *Tomb Raider*'s mysteriously named 'Style Units'. These are four zones set in a small, circular level, each showcasing one of the game's different areas (Peru, Greece, Egypt and Atlantis). What are they for? Nothing in particular, except to offer the chance to experience each zone in one small area. Odd.

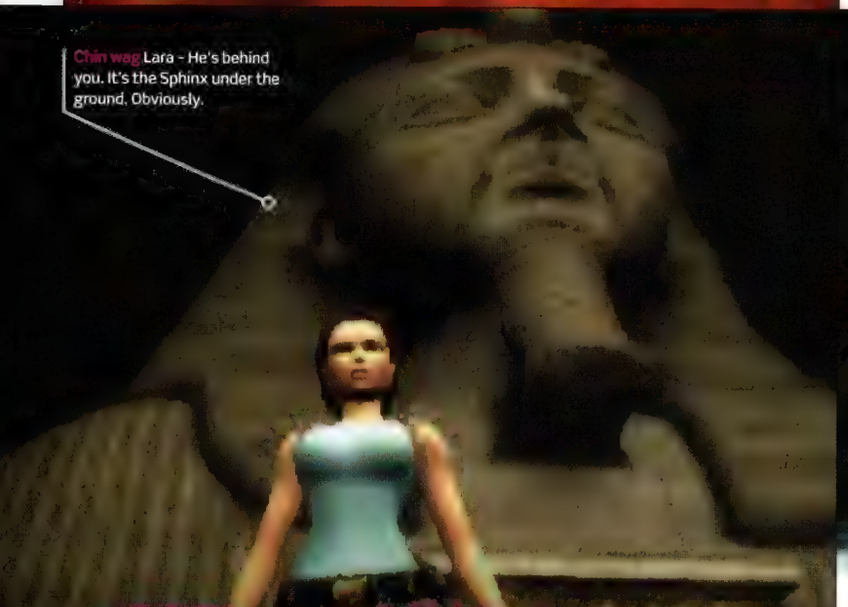
ON THE DISC
See Eidos's next game, *Kane & Lynch*, now
PS3/Latest

6 EVERY BULLET COUNTS

Tomb Raider's decade-old combat system can be excused for its retro-drabness, but today's gun geeks have come to expect something of a higher calibre. *Anniversary*'s solution? The adrenaline shot – a slow-mo, one-hit-kill mode activated with a well-timed dodge. Which is the perfect way to counter the dreariness of the dusty gunplay; turning Lara into the wrong kind of action heroine would have ruined the game's beautifully desolate atmosphere.

7 HOW DO I LOOK?

Lara's not just an action heroine, she's also a lady of leisure, as demonstrated by the wardrobe of secret costumes on offer. Once unlocked these are fully playable, so you can guide Lara through the game in any of her various guises. These include a solid gold form inspired by the Midas level, a terrifying skinless doppelganger, as Scorched Natla from the game's final boss fight (no flying though, which is a shame) a fetching wetsuit, and – our favourite – the classic Lara model from back in the day. Mmm... polygons.



8 GOING UNDERGROUND

Even among *Raider*'s many ludicrous plot points - the reappearance of dinosaurs several million years after their extinction, the discovery of the entirely fictional Atlantis, Lara's gravity-baiting bust - sweating your way through a series of utterly nails Indiana Jones-style booby traps and finding a massive great Sphinx *underground* stands alone in the lunacy stakes.

The twins You're going to need something much chunkier than these pootly pistols to take Natla out.
Goddess of War Natla's a businesswoman *and* a demon. Women really can multi-task.

9 THE ANGRY ATLANTEAN

Sort of a massive spoiler, this, but then the original game's been out for 10 years so you've had fair warning. The end of the game sees Jacqueline Natla, the businesswoman who hired Lara in the opening sequences, revealed as a malevolent demi-god from ancient Atlantis. Long story short, she sprouts wings and goes all firey, before Lara leaves her smouldering underneath a collapsed pyramid.

"The mummies and rats are smaller than they were in the first game"

Twist and shout Even these dusty columns are part of an intricate jump-filled puzzle.

10 BEAT THE GODS THEMSELVES

St Francis' Folly is a stunning slice of game design, a whole level transformed into one big uber-puzzle by cleverly connecting handfuls of smaller challenges. Featuring death-defying trials themed around Greek legends (Atlas, Damocles, Poseidon and electrical god Hephaestus), besting these is a high wire feat that'll punch your heart a new beat. If not, the hub of the level – a vertiginous shaft demanding nail-biting sequences of daredevil leaps – will.

Don't look down Well, do, if only to line up your next inadvisable experi-jump.

Stretch and bending Suicidal leaps like this are the only way to make progress.

Welcome All this cavorting, and you've not even entered one of the challenges yet.

Forward planning Can you spot where to go next? Lara's life depends on it.

Collapsing pillars Keep an eye out for rickety pillars you can convert into footbridges.

The ones we didn't pick...

Golden touch
Midas's Palace in Sweet Home [illegible] Midas's hands. Top scores [illegible] to [illegible] but [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ON THE DISC
Take a look at Rockstar's blockbuster, GTAIV

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

See the grisliest kills that Manhunt has to offer

Joel Snape

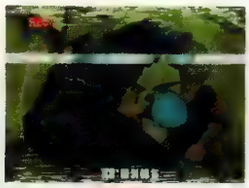
EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar North
FYI PS2 | 2003 | PSM43 91%
Manhunt remains one of the few games to tackle really unpleasant subject matter head on. After a mock execution, James Earl Cash finds himself in a snuff film, and the only way out is to obey the commands being gurgled into his ear by sick director Lionel Starkweather

SNUFF 'EM OUT The 25 nastiest executions

► Fighting people head-on is a no-no in *Manhunt*. It's all about catching them unawares – and the longer you stalk them, the more vicious Cash is. There are three kill types – Hasty, Violent and Gruesome – and *loads* of weapons...

Hasty... Plastic bag
Cash simply jams the bag over the hunter's head and then chokes him until he crumples to his knees and dies. Comes complete with horrible "I can't breathe" animations.



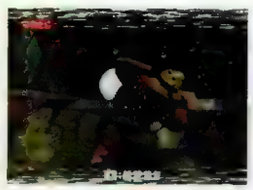
Violent... Plastic bag
Cash forces the bag over the enemy's head and rabbit-punches him in the lower back, causing him to fall to his knees. Cash then presses his knee into the victim's back and snaps his spine.

Gruesome... Plastic bag
Cash bags up the enemy, then spins him around and punches his face to mush before strangling him and breaking his neck. We're pretty sure there's a warning about this on plastic bags themselves.

Violent... Glass shard
Cash stabs his victim repeatedly in the stomach until he's dead. This one's known in the office as the 'Pesci', after the pint-sized psycho's similar turn with a pen in Casino.

Gruesome... Glass shard
Cash slashes the enemy down across his back, then grabs his head and stabs the hunter through each eye socket. Even when the saps's wearing goggles, this is pretty unpleasant.

Hasty... Wire
Cash whips the wire around the enemy's neck from behind and violently chokes the life out of him, Luca Brazzi-style. Textbook Mafia stuff, and it leaves you with a head to play with..



Gruesome... Wire
Cash wraps the wire around the hunter's neck from behind and forces his knee into his back for leverage. Then he simply saws his head off. It's a bit like slicing Emmental cheese.

Hasty... Nightstick
Cash clubs the copper in the stomach and then batters him several more times until he's dead. Don't worry, they're all corrupt. This move can also be done with the blackjack.

Gruesome... Nightstick
Cash quickly strikes the victim in the head twice before getting him in a headlock and breaking his neck. Honestly, it's OK – they're happy to die for Starkweather. Really.

Hasty... Crowbar
Cash springs towards the enemy and stabs him in the neck with the sharp end of the crowbar. The enemy simply crumples onto the floor as the blood starts to spurt all over the shop.

Violent... Crowbar
Cash swings and lodges the hooked portion of the crowbar in the enemy's head, then kicks him away to free the crowbar – and probably comes away with a chunk of skull. Unpleasant..

Gruesome... Crowbar
Cash stabs the enemy in the back with the crowbar, then yanks it out and, as the enemy falls to his knees, jams it straight through his cranium and watches him drop. *Awful.*

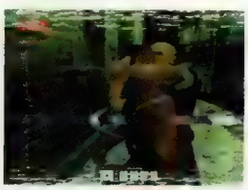
Hasty... Machete
Cash slashes the enemy in his back, dropping him to his knees. Next he grabs him by the hair and chops away at his neck until his head's severed. Just like opening up a coconut.

Violent... Machete
Cash chops the hunter twice in the chest before finishing the job by hacking away at his neck until his head comes off. Now throw it into a corner to distract his little friends.

Gruesome... Machete
Cash nails the enemy with a powerful chop to the torso and then hacks away at his neck until his head falls off. The downside is, anyone finding the head will go on super-alert. Not surprising, really.

Hasty... Sickle
Cash gouges his victim in the head and then finishes him off by slashing him in the back. You'd think he's be dead after the *first* bit, but you might as well be careful, right?

Violent... Sickle
Cash goes for a classic lob shot and hooks the unfortunate hunter in the unmentionables... then pauses for a second before ripping the sickle free. It's impossible to watch without wincing..



Gruesome... Sickle
Cash grabs the enemy's face and pulls the hunter back as he stabs him in the stomach and guts him. Then he wrenches the sickle out and the foe drops to the floor. As you would.

Hasty... Hammer
Cash grabs the hunter by the head while simultaneously swinging the hammer hard into his temple. The hunter crumples to the floor like a sack of wet meat cuttings.

Violent... Hammer
Cash pounds the hammer into his victim's back, dropping him to his knees. He then bends his head backwards and finishes him with a hard over-arm strike to the face.

Snuff FAQ

Q Why [illegible]?
A Because [illegible]

Q Why can't I [illegible] a violent kill?
A Probably [illegible]

Gruesome... Hammer
Cash smashes the enemy in the stomach so he falls to his knees. Then he finishes the job by swinging the hammer upwards into his face. Even the sound effects are sickening.

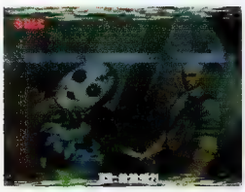
Hasty... Baseball bat
Cash just bashes his enemy over the back of the head, then finishes him off with a smash in the face. The camera gets smothered with blood – time for Cash to steal the base.

Violent... Baseball bat
Cash dishes out one in the spuds and makes the hunter reel over in pain. Then Cash finishes him off with a solid strike to the head, Robert De Niro in The Untouchables-style.

Gruesome... Baseball bat
Cash chokes the enemy from behind with the bat until the enemy falls semi-conscious. Cash then takes a step back and takes a huge swing at the enemy's head. It comes totally off. Home run!

Gruesome... Chainsaw
It takes a bit of setting up, but nailing a Cerberus guardsman with the game's final weapon sees Cash jam it downwards and directly through their skull. Oh dear God...

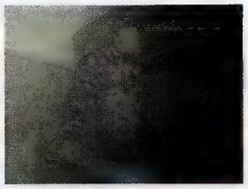
THUGS The five baddest gangs



Part of *Manhunt*'s uneasy appeal is how 'real' the gangs feel. Thousands of lines of spiteful dialogue ensure that you never feel sorry for them when they're about to get it in the neck...

Murder... The Hoods
Off-duty cops and street thugs. Disorganised idiots. Typical line: "I should have brought something to read. Hell, I should learn how to read."

Butcher... The Skinz
White supremacist lunatics, who consider Cash to be mixed race. Typical line: "I can smell your tainted blood like rotten eggs."



Shoot up... The Wardogs
Nerve-frazzled Vitnam vets and weekend warriors. Typical line: "Yep, I'm gonna snap his neck like a puppy dog's leg." Charming fellows.

Flee from... The Innocentz
Peyote-addled gang-bangers and giant-sized man-babies. Hang out in the shopping mall. Typical quote: "Diablo, give me the gringo's eyes tonight."

Shudder at... The Smilies
Lunatics that have taken over the asylum. Unique taste in body art. Typical quote: "Come on Barry, at least face me... we gotta talk about the kids."

AWFUL The four worst moments

Family fortunes Starkweather's kidnapped Cash's family. Unfortunately, if he's spotted by the Wardogs they'll cap his dear old mum and dad without a second's thought.

Push the button In the second Smilies level, you need to lure Fug out of his hiding place... so fry the sap who's strapped to the electroshock unit and wait for the maniac to totter over.

Video nasties In Innocence Lost, Starkweather's left you a little present... a videotape. Find a player, though, and it turns out that he *hasn't* let your surviving family members go after all...

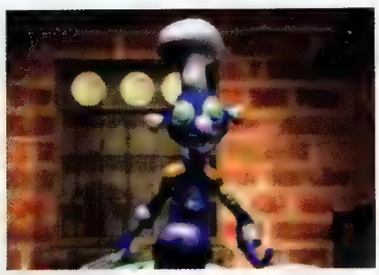
Follow the rabbit The white rabbit you're following leads you into an ambush and the Cerberus want you dead... but once you've blown mister floppy-ears' head off, it's time for revenge...

EXTRAS Unlock the even more unpleasant stuff

Hard as nails Get at least a three-star rating on five consecutive scenes and you'll bag one of four minigames. Doing the first four levels gets you a nailgun battle against the Hoodz...

Monkey see, monkey die Do levels 11-15 and you unlock the best bonus mission – the apes at the zoo have been driven mad by a banana shortage and now they're packing shotguns...

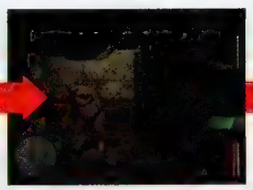
Total garbage Complete any level with a three-star ranking and you'll earn a panel showing stuff that didn't get into the game. Our favourite is Bin Bag, the boss of the unseen Lost gang.



Let's eat Sit it out until after the closing credits and there's one last shock: a kids' cookery programme at the end of Cash's snuff movie tape.

BUTCHERY Squeal, Piggsy, squeal

Piggsy's teased all the way through the game – a trotter here, a snort there – but in the lift to the penthouse a chainsaw takes out the door, and you're in the pig's fetid attic home.

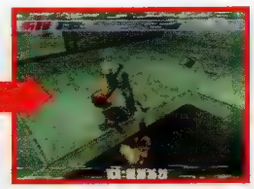


Snuffle First you hide...
Piggsy won't always appear on the radar, but his chainsaw makes a gentle thrum and he grunts occasionally. You'll want to grab one of the spikes lying around.

Squeal ....then you stab
When he turns his back, it's the same drill as the regular hunters, although he'll get away. You'll need to 'do' him three times and he'll unlock the door and flees.

Scream The trap goes off
Now it's time to sprint past him – don't worry, he'll follow – and up the staircase. Manoeuvre him over the grate once and he'll flee. Do it twice, and it collapses.

Saw Turning the tables
The pork-beast manages to hang on, but he's lost his chainsaw – which skitters across the floor to be collected by Cash.



Slice He's 'armless, really
Cash takes the big lad's arms off at the elbow, sending him plummeting down the shaft. Now you've got a chainsaw to deal with the Cerberus boys...

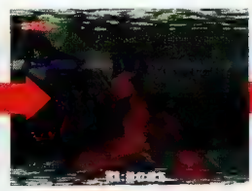
FINAL CUT Finishing off Starkweather

Casting aside years of gaming tradition, doing in *Manhunt*'s final boss is probably the easiest bit of the entire game. Especially since you've got a chainsaw retrieved from Piggsy...

Lights, Camera... Scream
With all his hunters and corrupt cops and armed guards gone, Starkweather finally has to face you. And it turns out that he's a little fat man in a dressing gown...

Action! Slash
He fires a few shots at you, but you just need to stay out of his way until he starts blubbering like a baby and pleading for his life. Then close in for the kill...

Rolling! Video nasty
First, Cash slices him in half and leaves his twitching torso upright on the floor. It gets much worse than this. Those with faint hearts should be careful.



Cut! Snuff film
Then Starkweather gets a chainsaw straight through the face. Don't worry, he's probably not suffering much. Not by now, anyway.

That's a wrap! Film over
Cash jerks the saw free and lets the corpse topple to the floor. And that's the end of one of PS2's most controversial games. Feel a bit ill? Don't blame you...

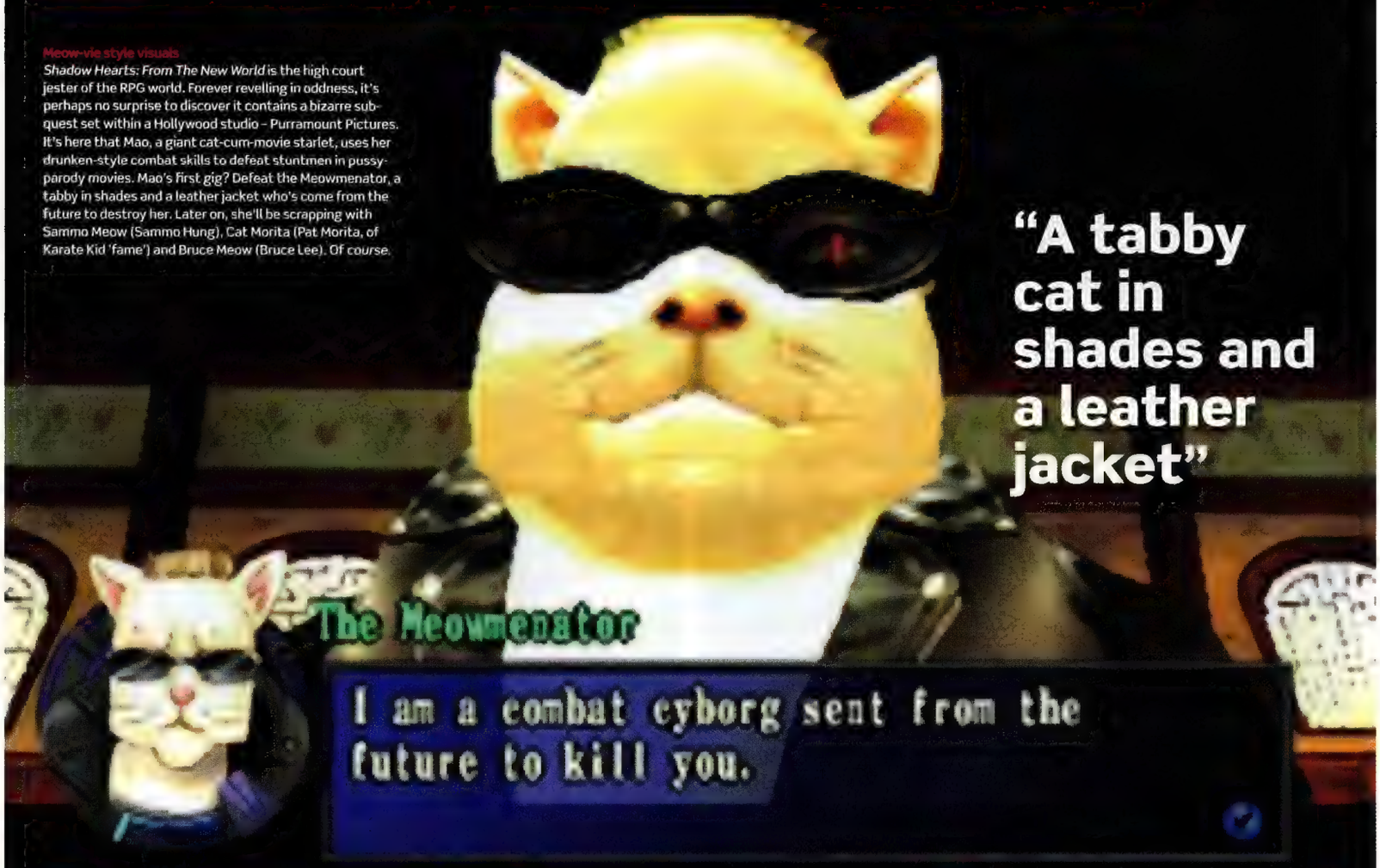
ON THE DISC
Waiting for a decent RPG? Try White Knight Story

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

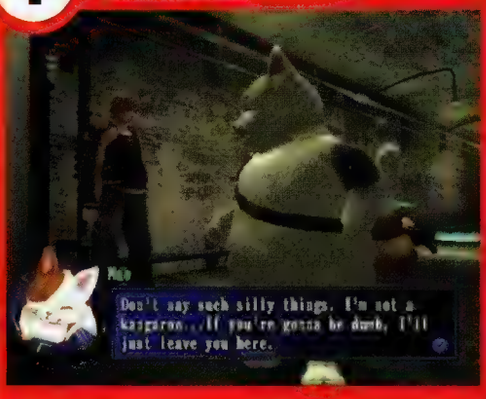
The Meowmenator in Shadow Hearts: From The New World

Meow-vie style visuals

Shadow Hearts: From The New World is the high court jester of the RPG world. Forever revelling in oddness, it's perhaps no surprise to discover it contains a bizarre sub-quest set within a Hollywood studio – Purramount Pictures. It's here that Mao, a giant cat-cum-movie starlet, uses her drunken-style combat skills to defeat stuntmen in pussy-parody movies. Mao's first gig? Defeat the Meowmenator, a tabby in shades and a leather jacket who's come from the future to destroy her. Later on, she'll be scrapping with Sammo Meow (Sammo Hung), Cat Morita (Pat Morita, of Karate Kid 'fame') and Bruce Meow (Bruce Lee). Of course.



1 What a feline

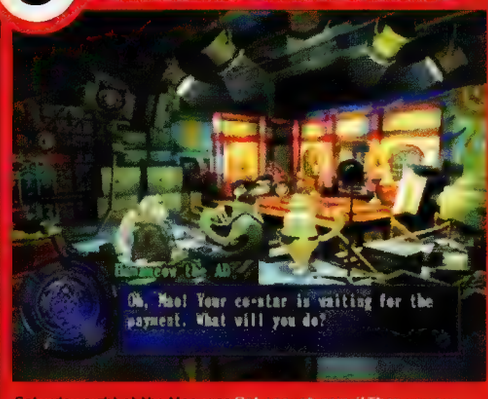


Mao do you do? Mao joins your party after just a few hours of play. She's the master of Frank, a nutty Brazillian ninja. She'll sign up to your cause once you help her break Al Capone out of jail in Chicago - being an alcoholic, Mao hates prohibition.

2 Grave robber

Mao money, Mao problems In order to pay the wages of the actors in her films, Mao has to gather cat coins while battling enemies. Kill an opponent with a special drunken fist move, and they'll be converted into a pawful of coins to put in the – yes – kitty.

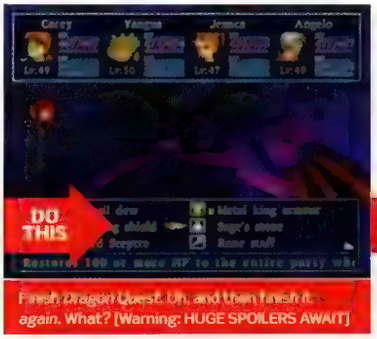
3 Behind the scenes



Saturday night at the Mao-vies Got enough coins? Then you can head over to Purramount and get filming. The cost of hiring actors spirals upwards as you progress, but each time you defeat one Mao's skills are powered up. Beats finding them in a chest for sure.

PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

Second ending › **Dragon Quest** › Spoiler-tastic secrets



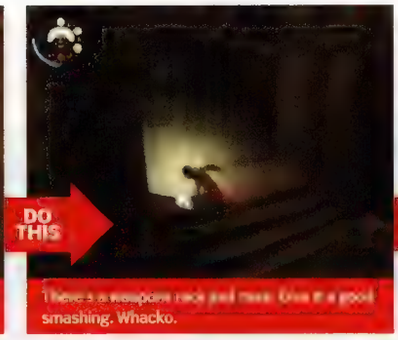
Finish Dragon Quest. Oh, and then finish it again. What? [Warning: HUGE SPOILERS AWAIT]

It's a secret second ending. This tells you loads about the history of the characters.

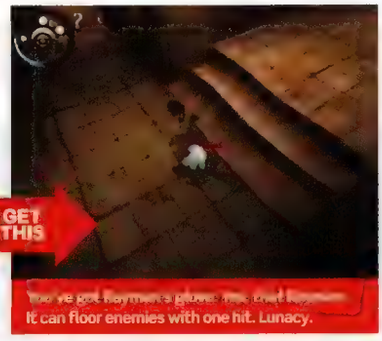
These subtitles on the shots give away quite a lot. You'll get quite a *DQ* education seeing this.

Hidden weapon › **Prince Of Persia: Warrior Within** › A big hand from Rayman

In the catacombs, there's a Dahaka stream head down the second corridor on the left.

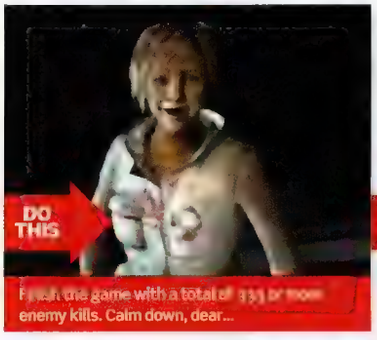


There's a weapons rack just near. Give it a good smashing. Whacko.

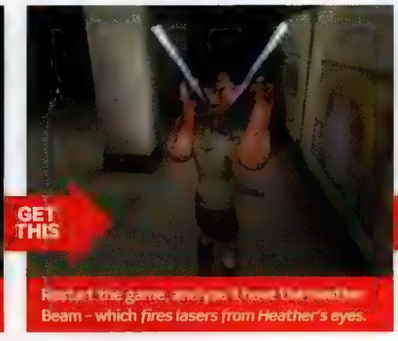


It can floor enemies with one hit. Lunacy.

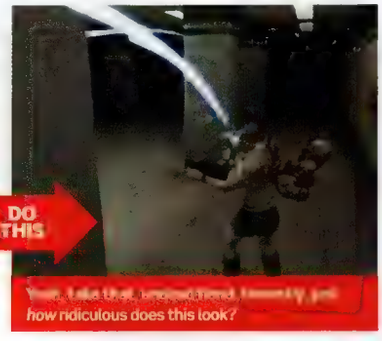
Insane lasers › **Silent Hill 3** › The 'Heather beam'



Finish the game with a total of 333 or more enemy kills. Calm down, dear...



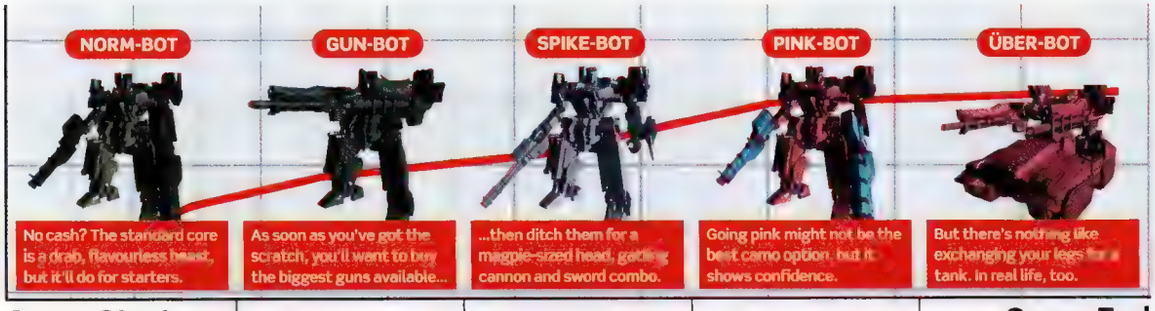
Restart the game, and you'll have the new Beam – which *fires lasers from Heather's eyes.*



how ridiculous does this look?

From zero to hero in... Armored Core 4

If in doubt, just bolt some extra guns on and spray yourself the colour of nail polish


NORM-BOT
No cash? The standard core is a drab, flavourless beast, but it'll do for starters.
GUN-BOT
As soon as you've got the scratch, you'll want to buy the biggest guns available...
SPIKE-BOT
...then ditch them for a magpie-sized head, gatling cannon and sword combo.
PINK-BOT
Going pink might not be the best camo option, but it shows confidence.
ÜBER-BOT
But there's nothing like exchanging your legs for a tank. In real life, too.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

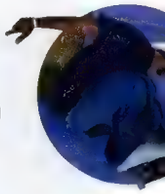
Cheats you *must* know

1 The Darkness
Special 2K Darkling
Dial 555-4263 at a phone to unlock a special 2K Darkling. Ooh, scary.

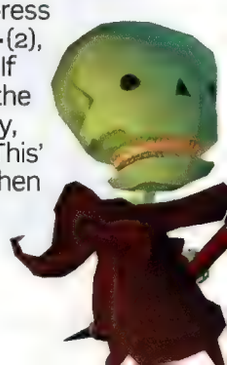
2 Medal Of Honor Vanguard
Invisibility
Pause the game and press ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓. If you entered the code correctly, the message 'Enter cheat code' will appear at the top left. Then press ↑, →, ←, ↓(2).

3 TMNT
Unlock Challenge Map 2
At the main menu, hold L1 and press ⊗(2), ◎, ⊗ to unlock Challenge Map 2. If you entered the code correctly, then there will be a sound effect.

4 Tony Hawk's Project 8
Full air stats
Enter 'drinkup' as a code for air stats.



5 Death Jr 2
Invincibility
Pause the game, then hold L1 and press ↑(2), ↓(2), ←(2), →(2), ◻, △. If you entered the code correctly, 'Can't Touch This' will appear when you exit the start menu.



ON THE DISC
Lots of Killzone goodness on the disc next time

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Hellish. Ghastly. Why Killzone still has its shock and awe

Duncan Harris

Pub SCEE
Dev Guerrilla
FYI PS2 | 2004 PSM55 88%| The *Halo*-killer that didn't quite hit the target, but inspired numerous urban combat games

In times of war, the facts often find themselves buried by noise and propaganda. So it goes with *Killzone*, a game remembered more as a failed attempt to knock *Halo* off its perch than as a startlingly graphic, adventurous piece of run-and-gun. Alarmingly few gamers could tell you, with confidence, why it's such a lynchpin of Sony's in-house catalogue. But as with any war, the closer you get to the front line, the closer you get to the truth.

And it emerges the second you find yourself on Vekta, shells exploding everywhere as the first wave of Helghast charges through the smog, your senses thrust completely into the role of ISA soldier Jan Templar. You take aim over the crest of that shattered trench, squeeze the trigger and feel the kick of the rifle stock as the crosshair rides up the screen, bullets ripping through Helghast armour

Thrillzone

Killzone's vision of war in its darkest, most desperate hour remains stunning even after three years. The creaking technology of PS2 can't lessen the impact of seeing a decadent society brought to ruin, its towering landmarks in various stages of collapse, its skies burning and its billboards left selling perfumes and burgers to the dead. Vekta is suffocating, bleached of colour and devoid of life, yet eerily familiar and endlessly diverse in its destruction.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *Killzone*? Let us know:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

One of the most damning criticisms levelled at the game is the suggestion that Guerrilla wasn't quite up to the task of building Sony's champion FPS – that its ambitions for blowing away the competition outstripped the horsepower of PS2 and its own talents as a developer. Not true. Building on the work of the hellish *Shellshock Nam '67*, *Killzone* took real-world soldiery and made its intensity and horror even more surreal.

When it comes to giving you a sense of physical presence, it's up there with games like *Riddick* and *The Darkness*. Templar and his team aren't just guns that bob up and down, reloaded by hands that may as well

The defining moment...

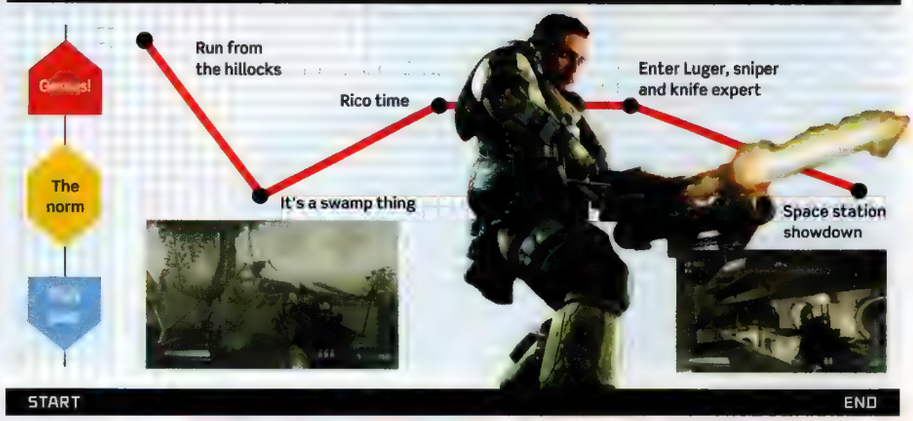
Consumer culture

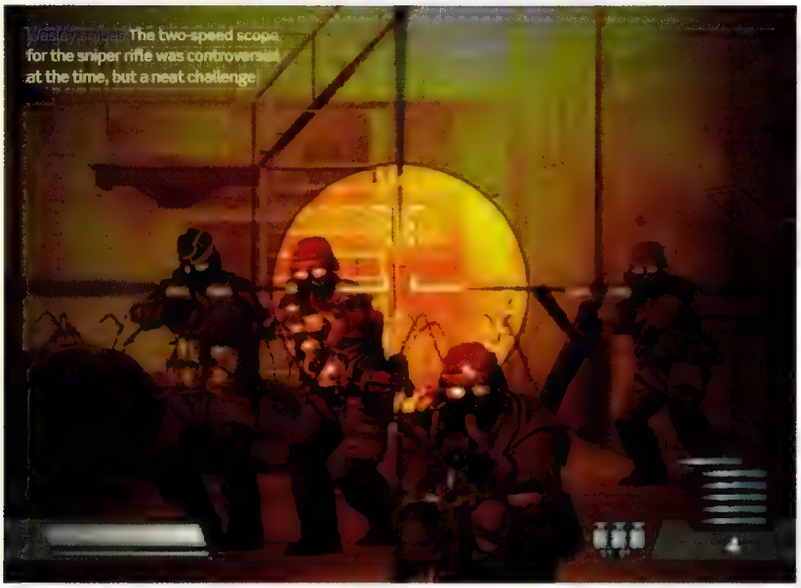
Clambering up an escalator, face pressed against the steps, unknowing Helghast mere feet away... *Killzone*'s third level was its best by far. None made you more aware of Vekta's former life as a consumer capital, and the degree to which the Second Helghan War had blown it all away. The abandoned stores were great venues for close quarters combat.

"A *Killzone* comic was planned by Dreamwave, but they went bust"

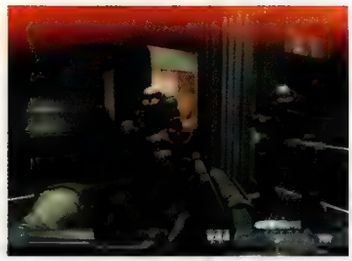
Dutting out *Killzone* still has the best rifle-buttage in the crowded FPS world.

The *Killzone* kill-o-meter





Wesley praised The two-speed scope for the sniper rifle was controversial at the time, but a neat challenge!



an SS Stormtrooper and Bob Hoskins) an action game has seen. This, and the repetive dialogue, undermines the Helghast. But they remain frightening, and perhaps the most scary thing about them is that beneath their thick shells of black Kevlar and glowing eyes are human beings, born of the same stock as the ISA, barking similar dialogue, yet poisoned by hate. Were they mere beasts they'd be twice as ridiculous, half as effective and one less reason to be so excited about their return.

be hovering in midair. They're people, with legs that struggle to vault over obstacles, bodies that lurch into every grenade toss and change of clip, and eyes that waver between different points of interest. *Killzone* isn't just about shooting soldiers, it's about *being* soldiers.

Sure, it's annoying that you can't jump, instead relying on a rarely available vault button to cross the terrain. But for soldiers bogged down by the heaviest of weapons – beautifully modelled slabs of gun metal that make others look like paper – it's a believable annoyance as well. Flowing you effortlessly through its linear yet complex levels, *without* need of objectives or a map, *Killzone* laid the groundwork for some of the greatest urban shooters of subsequent years. Without its example, the likes of *Black* and *Gears of War* would barely have known what to do with themselves.

In the Helghast, mankind's dirty little secret turned ghoulish avenging army, *Killzone* created a memorable opponent despite some of the most peculiar voice acting (a cross between

Zone of the wonders

Across swamps, streets, forests and mountains, *Killzone* had more good ideas than a dozen lesser games put together, but it lacked the time and energy to see them all through. The friction between ISA meathead Rico and Helghast defector Hakha, the forays into stealth, the love interest between Templar and Luger, the elaborate multi-player – all were introduced but few were explored. If *Killzone 2* can fulfil those ambitions with balance and polish, then watch out. There won't be any burying it this time around.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? If this game can still blow you away at a glance, imagine what the sequel has in store

Final thought A slice of Guerrilla warfare that defies the critics and carpet bombs the senses.

The Top 5

Killzone facts

1 Armoured corps
The distinctive armour of the Helghast takes clear inspiration from the CAPO troops of Jin-Roh, an anime feature film and allegory about the rise of Nazism. Intellectual.

2 Team tactics
Guerrilla Games began life as a trio of smaller Dutch developers who united to form a more multinational outfit, later acquired by Sony in 2005.

3 Expert guidance
The instruction booklet for the Pal edition takes the form of a rib-tickling propagandist newsletter.

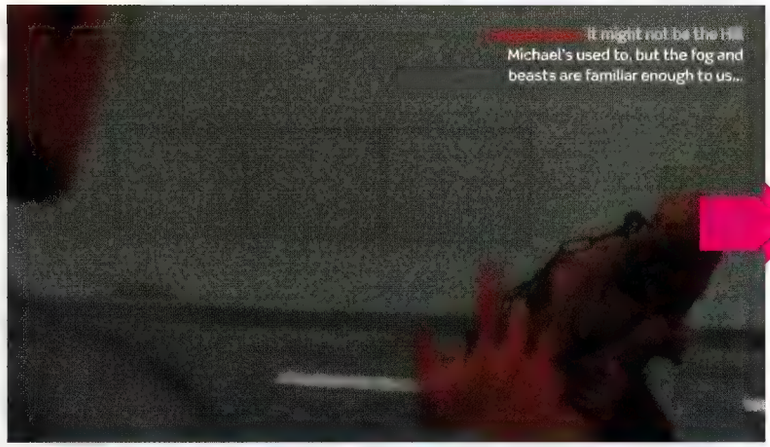
4 Acting up
Brian Cox's towering performance as Scolar Visari joined those of Sean Pertwee (Hakha), Steven Berkhoff (Lente, right) and Robocop's Ronny Cox (General Adams)

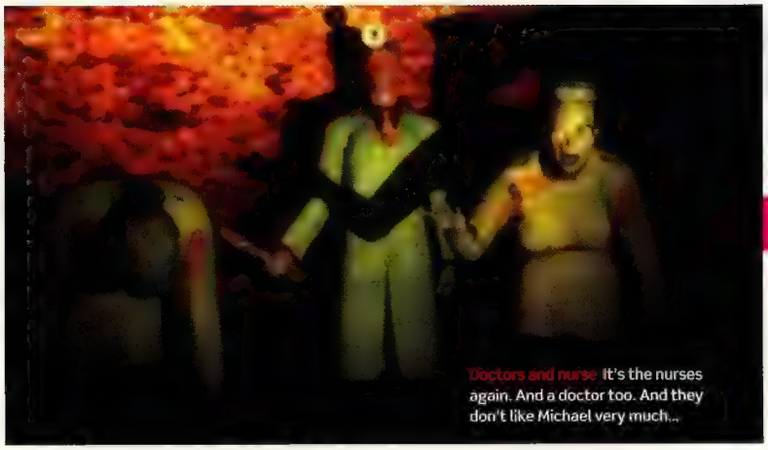
5 Name dropper
The game's working title was reportedly *Marines*. How dull? Very.

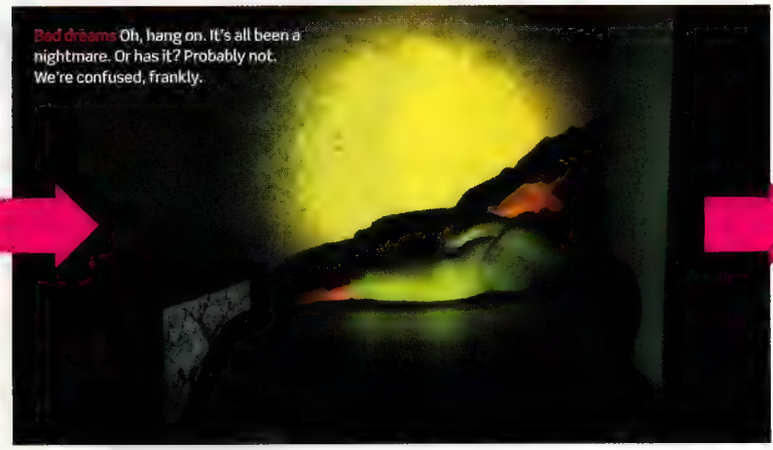
Chair up Main character Michael wakes up from a nightmare, but has constant visions of this wheelchair.
PLAYSTATION NATION

Silent Hill net film brings the chills

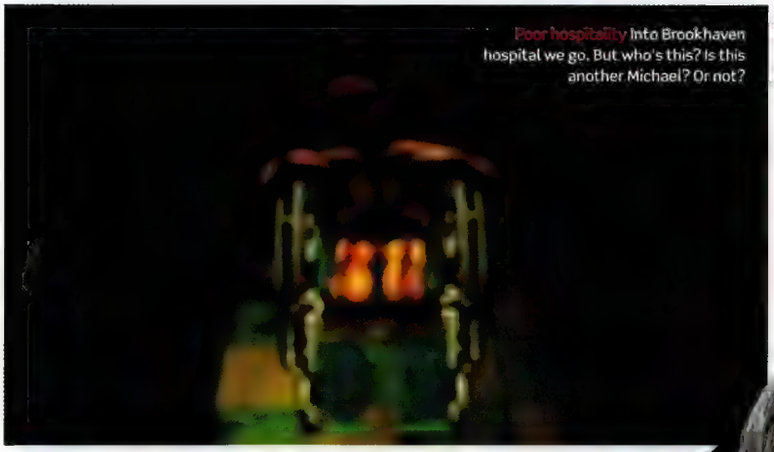
Were you disappointed by the *Silent Hill* movie? You weren't the only one. Fortunately, help is at hand. Motion Graphics student Nick Greenlee has painstakingly put together his own chill-filled film – Silent Hill: No Escape – on his Mac. Split into six episodes (so far), as each one was made available online, more and more of a stir was made – and now Nick has people continually contributing to the music (including Broken Notes, a band that specialise in playing the tunes from the games), the modelling, everything, entirely out of the goodness of their hearts. Get yourself to noescape.rateofinjury.com and start downloading now. Be afraid. Be very afraid.





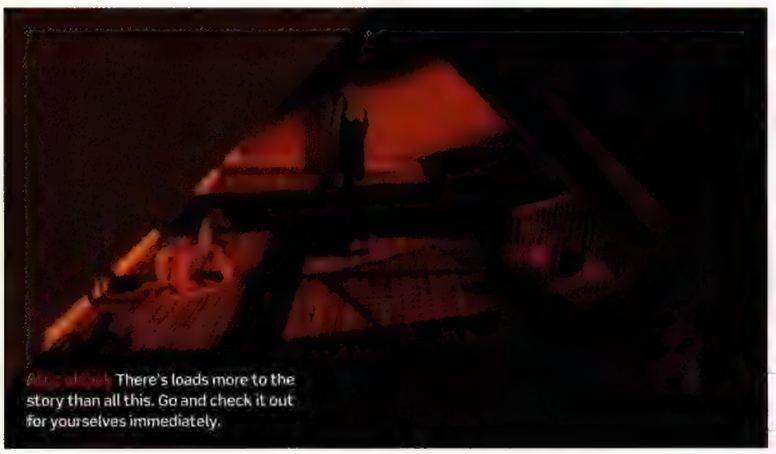


Hot pickle Michael finds himself in an alternate version of Silent Hill to the one he knows. Bad vibes.

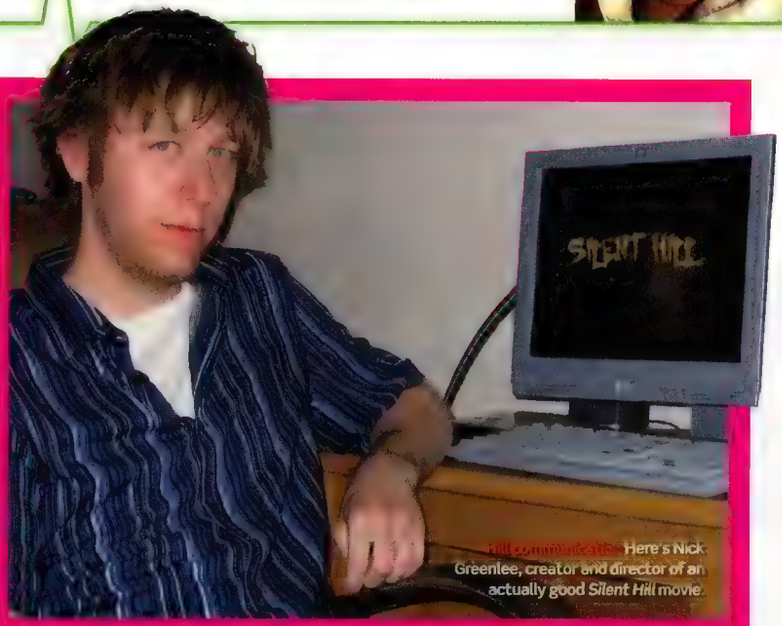


Poor hospitality Into Brookhaven hospital we go. But who's this? Is this another Michael? Or not?

Hell's own hospital gets even more hellish, with crucified patients. We're going private.



There's loads more to the story than all this. Go and check it out for yourselves immediately.



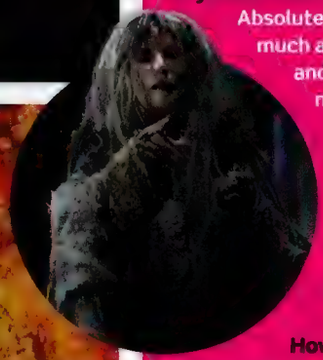
Here's Nick Greenlee, creator and director of an actually good *Silent Hill* movie.

Making bad dreams reality

Nick Greenlee talks us through the making of No Escape

So you like *Silent Hill*, we take it?

Absolutely nothing I've seen or played has ever affected me as much as the *Silent Hill* games. They sucked me in, digested me, and crapped me out into a blender full of awesome. I've never been so rattled and disturbed in my life.



Why did you decide to make your own *Silent Hill* film?

I've always seen myself directing a live-action *Silent Hill* eventually, and while the idea was a little far-fetched, it was still a goal of mine. However, that goal was shattered when the Christophe Gans movie hit. But I decided I was going to make a film anyway.

How did you make it? What programs did you use?

I had little to no experience with 3D Modeling, so I ended up using models readily available on the web. I did end up modifying almost all of those models. Most of the textures were made in Photoshop, and 97% of the animation was done in a cheap program called Poser.

I made episodes one and two back-to-back before making a little debut trailer for the online community. This sparked their interest, and I ended up getting a lot of help from them. A group of very talented musicians – Broken Notes – were making their own *Silent Hill*-style music, and they gave me permission to use all their custom tracks for my film. A guy that goes by the alias "Plague Man" stepped up and volunteered to model some original sets... for *free*. Using 3D Studio Max, he created the Brookhaven Lobby set and the Otherworld Bathroom set seen in the final episode. It was a daunting process, but with all that work under my belt, I managed to complete almost two hours of CG movie in about a year.

What did you think of Christophe Gans' *Silent Hill* movie?

I'll toss it in the mediocre category. The first hour is seriously *Silent Hill*. The Midwich Elementary scene was SO *Silent Hill*. The pacing of the entire first half was amazing. But what the hell was up with the second half? When the little girl explained the entire story as if we were in a coma for the last two hours, that's when it barrelled off a cliff.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS2 reviews section for the latest games

PS2 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS	**TIMESPLITTERS 2** **Pub** Eidos | **Dev** Free Radical **Web** eidos.co.uk "Every bullet leaves a scar or impact point, every object can be interacted with or destroyed. Brilliant." **PSM3 Rating** 95%	**HALF-LIFE** **Pub** Vivendi | **Dev** Valve | **Web** valvesoftware.com "The monsters are brilliantly designed, with each one matching a particular weapon that spells their deaths." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**BLACK** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Criterion | **Web** black.ea.com "*Black* offers unparalleled explosive thrills, but it lacks somewhat in context or emotional depth." **PSM3 Rating** 89%
STRATEGY/ MANAGEMENT	**LMA MANAGER 2006** **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters | **Web** codemasters.co.uk "If you fancy updating your team after the transfer window, *LMA* gives you an online option. A superb idea." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**THE SIMS** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Maxis **Web** thesims.ea.com "Mum leaves clothes everywhere, soils herself, plays rap music and refuses to do any cleaning." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**KESSEN III** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk "There's a real sense of scale and the battlefield feels alive with movement and mass conflict." **PSM3 Rating** 82%
RETRO	**STREET FIGHTER ALPHA ANTHOLOGY** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom **Web** capcom.com "This is worth the asking price for *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and *Pocket Fighter* alone. Best *SF* experience on PS2." **PSM3 Rating** 80%	**METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY** **Pub** SNK | **Dev** SNK | **Web** snkplaymoreusa.com "A 2D binge that packs in seven *Metal Slug* games. Ketchup-hued blood spurts everywhere. Repetitive, but tough." **PSM3 Rating** 79%	**ALIEN HOMINID** **Pub** Zoo Digital | **Dev** The Behemoth | **Web** alienhominid.com "*Hominid* really makes you work. Every minute you stay alive is an achievement almost unparalleled." **PSM3 Rating** 74%
SQUAD SHOOTER	**FREEDOM FIGHTERS** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Io Interactive **Web** freedomfighters.ea.com "You develop enormous trust in your group, who defend and attack intelligently." **PSM3 Rating** 92%	**SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS** **Pub** SCEA | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom2.playstation.com "Submerge into a silent world far deeper, and arguably more entertaining, than *Metal Gear Solid 2*." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2** **Pub** SCi | **Dev** Pivotal | **Web** conflict.com "If you favour the gritty realism of genuine modern war scenarios, get this." **PSM3 Rating** 85%

On your bike PS2's slickest cyclers

ROCK

Moto GP4

Pub Sony | **Dev** Namco
Web motogp-game.com
Probably the best motorbike sim on PS2, although that's not really saying much. Looks gorgeous, though, and has the most realistic handling of almost any PS2 racer there is going, two wheeled or four. So hard you'll want to cry, however.
PSM3 Rating 78%

SERIOUS

SBK-07 Superbikes Championship

Pub Koch | **Dev** Black Bean
Web sbk07.com
Another motorbike racer that, if anything, is even more serious-minded than *MotoGP*. Massively realistic, in-depth controls, but *SBK* suffers from an unfortunate lack of soul. Never mind, eh?
PSM3 Rating 73%

FRENCH

Le Tour De France

Pub Konami | **Dev** KCEO
Web letour.fr/indexus.html
Ah, a game about bikes without engines. Cycling at its most natural, and therefore tiring – juggling the stamina bar in *Le Tour De France* is a constant battle, and the stress will make you as worn out as riding the *actual* Tour De France. Perhaps.
PSM3 Rating 75%

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Back issues

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain

Kuri Kuri Mix

Pub Empire | **Dev** From Software
Web empiregames.co.uk

Your joypad has two sticks, right? And you have two thumbs. So why not have a puzzle game with two main characters, one mapped to each stick, controlled entirely independently of each other? Your thumbs – and eyes – can cope with that, right? *Right?*

It all seems simple at the start, as your two characters – rabbits named Cream and Chestnuts – skip merrily up the vertically-scrolling levels. Then it begins to get more complex, as you have to send one bunny across to one side of the screen to yank a lever to open a drawbridge for the other fluffy-tailed furball to make it over a chasm. Except all the while, both bunnies will be attacked by baddies, and you end up with your right eye glued to the top of the screen, your left eye watching the bottom and your thumbs getting a severe cased of mix(ed-up)omatosis. It eventually becomes insanely difficult, but solving really tough puzzles while beating up on the bad guys eventually becomes every bit as satisfying as a perfect *Resistance* head-shot or *Pro Evo* hat-trick. Well, nearly.

But puzzle games are rarely a commercial success on PS2 – *Monkey Ball*'s as popular as the genre ever really got on the format – and *Kuri Kuri Mix* didn't break that pattern. But if you spot this in the second-hand bin, we'd recommend you take a gamble on PlayStation's original raving rabbits.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	(04)	Resistance: Fall Of Man	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 89%
02	(03)	MotorStorm	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 88%
03	NEW	POTC: At World's End	Disney **Reviewed PSM89** 55%
04	(05)	Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	Ubisoft **Reviewed PSM87** 93%
05	(02)	Spider-Man 3	Activision **Reviewed PSM89** 72%
06	NEW	Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	2K Games **Reviewed PSM86** 39%
07	(07)	Virtua Tennis 3	Sega **Reviewed PSM86** 85%
08	(06)	Call Of Duty 3	Activision **Reviewed PSM86** 82%
09	(08)	F1 Championship Edition	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 50%
10	(09)	Fight Night Round 3	EA **Reviewed PSM86** 78%
11	(10)	NBA 2K7	2K Sports **Reviewed PSM88** 69%
12	(13)	Ridge Racer 7	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 79%
13	(11)	F.E.A.R.	Sierra **Reviewed PSM86** 72%
14	(14)	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	EA **Reviewed PSM86** 81%
15	(16)	Need For Speed Carbon	EA **Reviewed PSM86** 58%
16	(15)	Virtua Fighter 5	Sega **Reviewed PSM86** 87%
17	(18)	Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft **Reviewed PSM88** 75%
18	(17)	NHL 2K7	2K Sports **Reviewed PSM88** 76%
19	(17)	The Godfather: Don's Edition	EA **Reviewed PSM86** 66%
20	(19)	Def Jam Icon	EA **Reviewed PSM86** 52%

Four bore

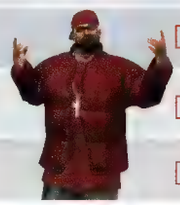
Oh, blimey. Don't buy *Fantastic Four*, people – it's one of PS3's very worst games. We know there isn't loads of software to choose from, but still...

Formula won

Lewis Hamilton's success seems to have given *F1*'s sales a boost. We're not keen on this in solo mode, but online it's massively competitive.

Woods you believe it?

Tiger Woods 08 is out soon, but you're still forking out for *07*. Tiger must have more money than Bill Gates, Bono and Jesus put together.



30000000

That's EA's revenue in America for the last year. We doubt much of that came from *Pac-Man Rally*.

You're playing...

John Paul Foy
He supports Man U, but John seems OK in spite of that.

1 **Pro Evo 6** "Best football game ever, and even a licensed Manchester United team."
2 **Canis Canem Edit** "Really enjoyed this. Slingshots, stink bombs, bikes, carnivals... I just hope there's a second one."
3 **GTA San Andreas** "Well, I just have to put this legend in."

We're playing...

Milford Coppock
Milf stays up late, fragging. Snigger. Sounds a bit rude.

1 **Resistance** "The downloadable maps have finally arrived, keeping me fragging into the early hours."
2 **Super Stardust HD** "Beautiful to look at and addictive to play, the best game on the store by far."
3 **Pro Evo 6** "*PES6* still takes over most lunchtimes, and will do until PS3 *PES* arrives."

They're playing...

Kirsten Forbes
Producer of PS2's upcoming *Crash Of The Titans*.

1 **Lego Star Wars 2** "I just love the multi-player mode, and it's incredibly good fun all-round."
2 **Katamari Damacy** "I adore its pure wackiness."
3 **Twisted Metal: Head-On** "*Twisted Metal* gives me the obsessive collecting-shooting action I crave. Excellent stuff."

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PSP games rated? Go here

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
PUZZLERS	**LOCOROCO** **Pub** SCEI	**LUMINES 2** **Pub** Buena Vista	**CRUSH** **Pub** Sega
	Dev SCEI **Web** locoroco.com	**Dev** Q **Web** lumines2thegame.com	**Dev** Kuju **Web** sega.com
	"Guide your grinning sphere through various lands. Odd, entertaining and the happiest game there is on PSP." **PSM3 Rating** 93%	"Games like this are what your PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for ages. Just great." **PSM3 Rating** 92%	"At any moment, you can crush the game into 2D. Dozens of configurations to be packed together." **PSM3 Rating** 90%
	84%	78%	77% 85% 82%
FOOTBALL	**FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD 2007** **Pub** Sega **Dev** Sports Interactive **Web** sigames.com	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6** **Pub** Konami **Dev** Konami **Web** pesfan.com	**FIFA '06** **Pub** EA **Dev** EA **Web** easports..com/games/fifa06
	"Takes last year's version and builds on it. Exceeds expectations and stands tall." **PSM3 Rating** 86%	"By no means perfect, but *PES6* is essential for fans of the series. More than enough reason to take PSP on a journey." **PSM3 Rating** 84%	"The camera works well, the atmosphere is realistic and the Season mode provides great depth" **PSM3 Rating** 81%
	79%	78%	
WI-FI	**VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR** **Pub** Sega **Dev** Sumo Digital **Web** sega.com	**BURNOUT LEGENDS** **Pub** EA **Dev** Team Fusion **Web** ea.com	**SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO** **Pub** SCEE **Dev** Zipper **Web** socom-game.com
	"*Virtua Tennis* experts will demolish you with shots you wouldn't believe, leaving you swearing like McEnroe." **PSM3 Rating** 91%	"If you want a fast, fun racer with great online play, then this is it. It's got loads to do." **PSM3 Rating** 92%	"An awesome online mode lets you boss the virtual war zone with a group of your mates. Terrific." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
	84% 82% 81% 84% 80% 83%		
ODDBALL	**GITAROO MAN LIVES!** **Pub** Koei **Dev** Koei **Web** koei.co.uk	**HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE** **Pub** Codemasters **Dev** Arte Piazza **Web** nmfarm.com	**EVERY EXTEND EXTRA** **Pub** Q Entertainment **Dev** Bandai **Web** everyextendextra.com
	"A rhythm action game with all the visual flair of a Japanese anime and the most eclectic soundtrack ever." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	"Till land, sow seeds, water crops... discover what it means to feel love through the nurturing of pumpkins." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	"You play a bomb. Blow up everything in your radius and get combos for massive points. Very good indeed." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
	65% 72% 81% 75%		

Down on the farm Games that make you work the land

MECHA

Harvest Moon: Innocent Life

Pub 505 Game Street | **Dev** Arte Piazza
Web hmfarm.com
A touch different to PS2's version of *Harvest Moon* in that it's set in the future. And you play a robot. But even robots need to grow turnips, sell produce and try to get their end away with the local ladies.
PSM3 Rating 85%

PUZZLING

Herdy Gerdy

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Core Design
Web eidosinteractive.com
Big things were expected of this *Lemmings*-but-in-3D-with-farm-animals-'em-up, but *Herdy Gerdy* never quite gelled, deciding that merely being a puzzler wasn't enough and throwing in a load of slightly lame RPG bits. So-so.
PSM3 Rating 69%

WEIRD

Super Farm

Pub Ignition | **Dev** Asobo Studios
Web ignitionent.com
It's *Power Stone*, but instead of big, muscly blokes chucking rocks and chairs about you've got, erm, pigs, rabbits and hens lobbing their own excrement at each other. Sadly, this isn't as brilliant as it sounds. *Average Farm* would be more apt.
PSM3 Rating 60%

@ **Disagree with our choices?** Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots and do your worst/best at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk Subject line: "WRONG!"

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Nice Apps

Trick up your console

On sound ground

App Logic3 Sound Grip
Web spectravideo.com

The science of naming is sometimes quite easy. What do you call a set of click-on PSP speakers that also enhance grip as well as sound? Well... And so we have here the Sound Grip, which pumps up PSP's audio quality through its two speakers and class D amp, isn't too heavy and helps elimate the dreaded 'slidey-hands' syndrome. It requires two AAA batteries, though, although you can run it through the PSP's power lead if you're playing at home. Just imagine the extra oomph this gizmo could give to the LocoRocos sweet singing. Aw.

Fun in the sun

App Solar-powered PSP charger
Web spectravideo.com

Tired of recharging your PSP battery with boring old electricity? Then you could try out this solar-powered charger. Just plug it into your PSP and then sit outside in the sun for all your recharging needs. Problems? Well, you need to sit bathed in sunlight for eight straight hours for a full recharge. And the chances of you getting eight solid hours of sunlight in this country are slim, even on the brightest of days. Still, if you're off on holiday to the Bahamas or Jamaica or somewhere, you might be in luck. We, however, will probably stick to just plugging our handhelds into the wall socket. Each to their own.

Guitar rocks

App PS2 pad to PS3 adapter
Web pricegrabber.com

Most of the time, we wouldn't recommend adapters such as these – the DualShock's rumble still won't work, even via adapter. However, if you're into *Guitar Hero*, then we would – the guitars don't work on PS3. So if you want some rawk action on PS3 – complete with Star Power – then, until the advent of *Rock Band*, you're going to be after one of these.

Hero worship
Play *Guitar Hero* on PS3 with this.

Early Warning System

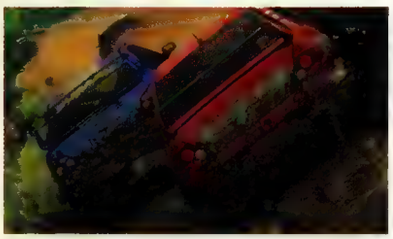
Your PlayStation release schedule

Want it? Tick it!

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	
Surf's Up	Ubisoft	Aug 3	PS3	☐
NASCAR 08	EA	Aug 10	PS3	☐
Pac-Man Rally	EA	Aug 10	PSP	☐
Madden 08	EA	Aug 17	PS3	☐
Warhawk	Sony	Aug 28	PS3	☐
Medal Of Honor Airborne	EA	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	Ubisoft	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Blazing Angels 2	Ubisoft	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Stuntman Ignition	THQ	Aug 31	PS3	☐
Skate	EA	Aug 31		☐
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	Capcom	Aug 31	PSP	☐
Alien Syndrome	Sega	Aug 31	PSP	☐
Stranglehold	Midway	Sep 7	PS3	☐
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ	Sep 21	PS3	☐
Blacksite: Area 51	Midway	Sep 28	PS3	☐
FIFA 08	EA	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Mercenaries 2	EA	Sep 28	PS3	☐
Sega Rally	Sega	Sep 28		☐
The Club	Sega	Oct 5	PS3	☐
Grand Theft Auto IV	Rockstar	Oct 19	PS3	☐
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Konami	Oct 25	PS3	☐
Colin McRae: DIRT	Codemasters	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Dark Sector	D3P	Oct 26	PS3	☐
Beowulf	Ubisoft	Nov 2	PS3	☐
Call Of Duty 4	Activision	Nov 2	PS3	☐
Need For Speed Prostreet	EA	Nov 2	PS3	☐
The Simpsons	EA	Nov 2	PS3	☐
Half-Life 2	EA	Nov 2	PS3	☐
Clive Barker's Jericho	Codemasters	Nov 2	PS3	☐
WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008	THQ	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Assassin's Creed	Ubisoft	Nov 9	PS3	☐
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men		Nov 9		☐
Army Of Two	EA	Nov 14	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	Nov 14	PS3	☐
Haze	Ubisoft	Nov 23	PS3	☐
Alone In The Dark	Atari	Dec 7	PS3	☐
Burnout Paradise	EA	Dec 14	PS3	☐
Tom Clancy's Endwar	Ubisoft	Dec 14	PS3	☐
Frontlines: Fuels Of War	THQ	Jan 4	PS3	☐
Battlefield: Bad Company	EA	Feb 1	PS3	☐

Skate

It's almost here, the game that hopes to send *Tony Hawk* grinding off the rails. We were hoping to review it this month, but we'll have it next time – deffo.



Sega Rally

We're really quite excited about this, which looks muddier than *MotorStorm* and Glastonbury combined, and twice as exhilarating.

Kane & Lynch

Eidos's twin psychopaths continue to look like they might make one of PS3's finest games. *K&L* looks violent, sweary and very entertaining indeed.

eBay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

Lara Croft statue

It's a limited edition, and really rather fine, figurine of Crofty. It's number 1215 of 3500, apparently, and is a bijou ten inches tall. A healthy profit's been made there too, though as far as we're concerned, Lara's only really Lara when she's wearing her exploring shorts. Still, highly collectible all the same.

Sold $52.00 **Original Price** $5.00
Profit $47.00

Katamari hat

It looks a bit like the canopy of an umbrella in this photo, but it is, in fact, a Katamari hat made out of what looks like Fuzzy Felt. The pom-pom on top is supported by a pipe cleaner too, so it'll stand up straight, thus allowing you to look cool like a polar bear in a freezer. Or like a prat, depending on your opinion of the headwear in question. We like it, though, and wish we had one.

Sold Nope **Original Price** $6.00
Profit None

Street Fighter II watch

Imagine the scene: you're at a party. The woman of your dreams approaches. "Hi," she pouts into your ear. "Can you tell me what time it is?" You glance at your watch. "11pm, you tell her." But she's gone before you even get the sentence out. Why? Because you're wearing a really tacky watch with Blanka from *Street Fighter II* on it, you pranny. What were you *thinking*? Get a proper timepiece, please.

Sold Nope **Original Price** $0.97
Profit None

ON THE DISC
See what PS3 is capable of on your free DVD

PS3 Playlist

TOP THREE

ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION
Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Bethesda
Web elderscrolls.com
"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."
PSM3 Rating 93%

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN
Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac
Web us.playstation.com
"An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff."
PSM3 Rating 89%

MOTORSTORM
Pub Sony | **Dev** Evolution
Web motorstorm.com
"Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises."
PSM3 Rating 88%

FOUR TO SIX

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5
Pub Sega | **Dev** AM2
Web sega.com/vf5
"Perhaps the best scrapper ever, but *VF5* is *such* an acquired taste. Still, technically this is flawless."
PSM3 Rating 87%

VIRTUA TENNIS 3
Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo
Web sega.com
"No online play, but still the best multi-player game on PS3. A must-buy for *Virtua Tennis* fans everywhere."
PSM3 Rating 85%

CALL OF DUTY 3
Pub Activision | **Dev** Treyarch
Web callofduty.com
"The only additions PS3 offers above the PS2 game is shinier, sharper graphics. Still, the next-gen starts here."
PSM3 Rating 82%

SEVEN TO NINE

TIGER WOODS 07
Pub EA | **Dev** EA
Web easports.com/tigerwoods07
"Still the best console golf game, but trapped in the bunker of its own success. It's all very familiar fare."
PSM3 Rating 81%

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA
Pub Eidos | **Dev** Team Ninja
Web ninjagaidengame.com
"Perfect fighting that's all about precision, but it's hard. Really hard."
PSM3 Rating 80%

NBA STREET HOMECOURT
Pub EA | **Dev** EA Big
Web easports.com/nbastreet4
"More of a showing-off sim than anything, but a fun one at that. It definitely makes you feel like The Man."
PSM3 Rating 80%

TEN AND ELEVEN

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8
Pub Activision | **Dev** Neversoft
Web tonyhawksproject8.com
"A solid, back-to-basics return to the glory days of the Hawk series. He's certainly still delivering the goods."
PSM3 Rating 80%

RIDGE RACER 7
Pub Sony | **Dev** Namco
Web ridgeracer7.net
"The ultimate *Ridge* – glowing with power and offering exactly want you want."
PSM3 Rating 79%

PSM3'S MOST WANTED
DEVIL MAY CRY 4
Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Web devilmaycry.com
A brief hands-on suggests excellent things. Can't wait.

AVOID

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT
"This is one of the worst games we've played for ages. A disgrace on pretty much every level."
PSM3 Rating 28%

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES
"A budget PlayStation 2 game wearing its big sister's high-definition make-up. Stick to *Burnout*."
PSM3 Rating 36%

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
"Dull, uninspired and a complete waste of PS3's power. Fantastic? They're not even adequate."
PSM3 Rating 39%

Blob-a-job PlayStation's best (and only) sticky blob-'em-ups

CHEERY

LocoRoco
Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Web locoroco.com
The greatest reason to own a PSP, and one of the finest reasons to be into videogames in general. Tilt your PSP with o and u, and watch your happy yellow blob roll about the place like a ball of marzipan on Prozac. Just brilliant. Go out and buy it right now.
PSM3 Rating 93%

FRUSTRATING

Mercury Meltdown
Pub Ignition | **Dev** Ignition
Web ignitionent.com/meltdown
Guide your blob of mercury across a set of spiky traps and narrow ledges, ensuring you lose as little of your globule over the side as possible. Insanely difficult, but hugely addictive, qualities not lessened by *Mercury*'s recent trip across to PS2.
PSM3 Rating 82%

DAFT

We Love Katamari
Pub EA | **Dev** Namco
Web katamari.namco.com
Insane, stupid, loveable and superb rolly-bally action, as you guide a whacking great sphere about the landscape rolling up furniture, people, animals and everything else into a ball. OK, balls and blobs aren't quite the same thing. So sue us.
PSM3 Rating 82%

Got a PS3 question? Then we'll answer it. Send your next-gen console queries to: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 question!"

Out now on Blu-ray

Movies for your PS3

The Departed

Director: Martin Scorsese | **Starring** Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, Jack Nicholson

Pleasing to see a recent movie coming to Blu-ray, rather than something a decade old. A sure sign that the format is beginning to gather momentum. Anyway, to Oscar winner The Departed, a thriller about organised crime and undercover policemen, that we'd spoil if we went into too much detail about the plot. Although some of PSM3 think it's just a tad overrated, most people would consider this an essential disc.

Reign Of Fire

Director: Rob Bowman | **Starring** Christian Bale, Matthew McConaughey, Izabella Scorupco

Here be dragons. Earth's been under attack from the giant, fire-breathing beasts for 20 years, and there are hardly any humans left any more. Still, shit happens. Anyway, Reign Of Fire's hardly the world's greatest movie, but the dragons and their flames certainly look impressive flying across the screen in all their Blu-ray finery, and it all swishes past attention-grabbingly enough. Entertaining, in a mildly forgettable way.

Starship Troopers

Director: Paul Verhoeven | **Starring** Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer, Denise Richards, Jake Busey

It's the old, old story: boy meets girl, girl joins the space military, boy follows girl into space military, giant alien insects hurl asteroid at Earth, boy's family die, boy and girl kick some ugly bug butt. That's Starship Troopers in a nutshell, and quite entertaining it is too, with a subtle anti-war theme underpinning the action. Not an amazing film, but powerful enough to have you panicking about bed bugs before you go to sleep.

PSM3 Tunes Where you get great music for free

Ask The DJ
Mr Hudson & The Library

It's sort of indie-RnB-flamenco punk, or something. It's a little peculiar, certainly, but it works in a catchy, choppy sort of way. And hey, libraries are cool. Yes, they are.

Get it: myspace.com/mrhudson

Emergency (live)
Paramore

Highly-polished pop-metal, a bit like Avril Lavigne with louder guitars. Thoroughly listenable despite the damning nature of that last statement. No, really, it is.

Get it: myfreedownload.co.uk/paramore

Born Of A Star
Holy Hail

It's the new CSS. You might not be bored of, or even have heard of, the last CSS yet, but this disco-punk tune is enough to keep us happy.

Get it: myspace.com/holyhail

The Henney Buggy Band
Sufjan Stevens

Trumpets, keyboards and a slice of good, old-fashioned eccentricity. We like Sufjan here in the office. Still not sure what the Henney Buggy Band actually is, though.

Get it: freeindie.com

Girls Who Play Guitars
Maximo Park

Jaunty guitar pop from the best thing to come out of the north-east since stottie cakes. Another song to hammer a nail in the coffin of the memory of Jimmy Nail. Phew.

Get it: clickmusic.com

@ Tune-up Send us your music links and we'll stick 'em in the mag. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Music!"

Object of Desire

Expensive tech you know you need

PSM3 BUY IT

Fatman Fatboys Daft name, great speakers

Audio is more important in gaming than ever these days. Although what everyone immediately thinks of when they bring the next generation to mind is super-swish graphics, super-swish sound is equally vital for properly immersive gaming. *Resistance: Fall Of Man* without the squelches and screams of the aliens? *Call Of Duty* without the hollers and yells of your comrades? *Ridge Racer* without the zingy music? Not so good, really.

Which brings us to the entertainingly named Fatboys speakers, which offer up excellent sound quality and nice looks for an only slightly ridiculous price tag. They look small and like round, aluminium black eggs, but they certainly perform. Techy info? Yeah, you love it. So it's got a one-inch silk tweeter, 35 watts recommended RMS power, eight ohms nominal impedance (what, you don't know what that is? For shame), and a crossover frequency of 4.5Khz. Oh, and it's all at a reasonably lightweight seven kilograms.

Basically, all that boils down to meaning that these speakers are pretty damn good, and well worth investigating if you want to add some aural oomph to your gaming set-up. Sure, there are other options around, but no others where you can talk about "pumping bass through your Fatboys". Worth the admission price alone, that.

Tech Spec

Price £500
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Web fat-man.co.uk

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High text demand in South, Midlands, N EAST & Lpool
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High text demand in London Midlands, N. EAST & Lpool
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High text demand in London Midlands, Manchester Scotland and Shires
Nice looking, but loves to get out really, feeling sexy needs to do something about it.
High text demand in London, Midlands, Manchester Scotland and Shires
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High text demand in London Midlands, Yorkshire, Lpool Scotland and Cardiff
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High text demand in London, Leeds, Birm' Kent, Scotland and Shires
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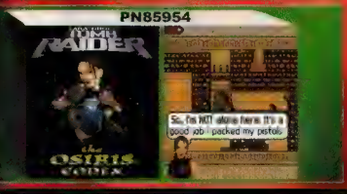

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5 things to remember this month

Killzone 2 looks better than you could have hoped
"Some of the most vivid action ever"
page 20

New Resi seems even more horrifying
"Victims turn extra-aggressive and then start bleeding from the eyes"
page 32

MGS4 looks great, but baffling
"Otacon, Vamp and Raiden are back, but there are loads of questions"
page 34

The Manhunt 2 censors just didn't get it
"'A game of unremitting bleakness'? That's the *point*..."
page 76

This is the best game character of 2007
"It's the Meowmenator, a giant tabby from the future in shades and a leather jacket"
page 96

Next issue on sale
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1. *Pro Evo 2008* is set to kick off - we get hands-on
2. *Metal Gear Solid 4* - first in-game details on PS3's most wanted, but baffling, title.
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Contributors
Joel Snape, Nathan Ditum, Jon Hamblin, Louis Pattison, Alex Dale, Daniel Griffiths, Steve Bailey, Duncan Harris, Sophie Mason, Nick Cox

DVD Design and Animation
David Newman, Daniel Pearce
Music and Sound Effects
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Additional Sound Effects
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Video Editing
Chaanah Carr, Liam Staines
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Matthew Pierce
Production Manager
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Lara Bakshi (01225 442244)
Classified Sales Executive
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ABC PSM3 26,584
June to Dec 2006

Sony President gets new job

The real story about Jack Tretton and Chewbacca. Honest.

Wook Who's Talking Yes, SCEA boss Jack Tretton pretended he could understand Chewie at E3. Unless he could and, er...

For most fans, the highlight of Sony's E3 keynote speech wasn't the amazing-looking *Killzone 2*, nor *Little Big Planet*, *Unreal Tournament 3* or even Kaz 'Hip Hop' Hirai announcing the new, slightly thinner, PSP it was SCEA President Jack Tretton explaining to Chewbacca that a different-coloured handheld was a very exciting thing indeed. In an entirely non-embarrassing way.

But you missed the best bit: Jackie-boy continuing his explanation to a PSP-doubting Chewie once the cameras were off...

Jack Tretton: So, Chewie – d'you think this machine could do the Kessel run in four parsecs, old chum?
Chewie: Gnnaaargh?
Jackie: She's fast enough for you, *old man*.
Chewie: Rrrrrargh.
Jackie: Look at the size of that thing! That one's about the death star, obviously.
Chewie: Gnarrrrr.
Jackie: Now don't you worry, Chewie. I know a few manoeuvres.
Chewie: I'm just a man in a suit, you know.

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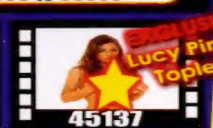

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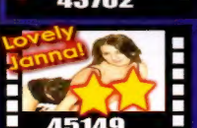

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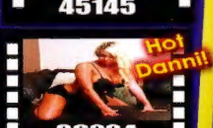

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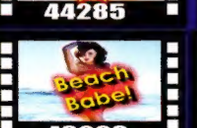

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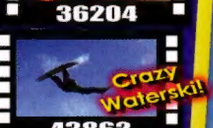

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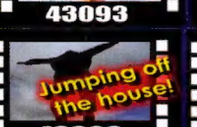

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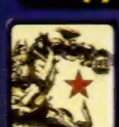
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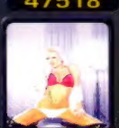
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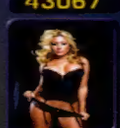
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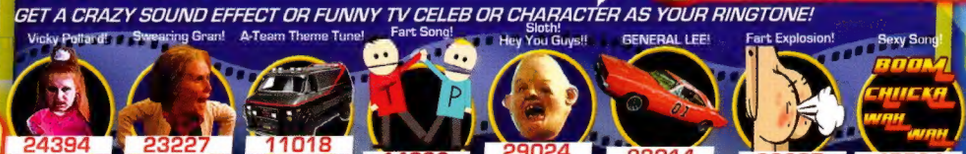

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